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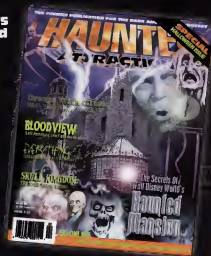
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Note from Underground

Though Universal Studios has become the leading entertainment corporation of our time, it was a far cry from that back in the early 1930s, when it was struggling for financial stability under the control of founder Carl Laemmle. In fact, Universal Studios was a relatively small film company at the time, a decidedly minor player beside major corporations like MGM, Paramount, Warner Bros., Twentieth Century-Fox and RKO.

The '30s were a tough time for everyone, but Universal managed to eke out a respectable existence through the horror genre, drawing on Expressionism and the talents of directors Tod Browning (*Dracula*) and James Whale (*Frankenstein*) and cameraman Karl Freund (*The Mummy*). As the Depression loomed in the horizon, Universal saw potential in elegantly mounted horror pieces, and entered into its golden age with follow ups like *The Old Dark House* (1932), *The Invisible Man* (1935) and *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), along with other greats like *Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1932), *The Black Cat* (1934), *Werewolf of London* (1935), *The Invisible Ray* (1935) and *Dracula's Daughter* (1936).

Though a second cycle of films would not be as critically acclaimed, they too would prove to have staying power. And yet, Rowland V. Lee and George Waggoner's *The Wolf Man* (1941) aside, Universal's second horror cycle fell into schlock and self-parody with offerings like *The Invisible Man Returns* (1940), *The Mummy's Hand* (1940) and *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* (1943).

Universal Studios continued to dabble in the genre and even managed one more classic, *Creature From the Black Lagoon*, on its way to becoming Hollywood's leading studio. Which may explain why the company continues to invest in horror, maybe even out of respect for the films that put the company through the hard years such a long time ago.

Today's top news, however, has to do with Rob Zombie's *House of 1000 Corpses* being unceremoniously ditched by Universal shortly after an advance screening. Everyone seems to agree that the decision will probably go down as one of the top bone-headed moves in that company's long history. But in fairness, it's safe to say that Universal Pictures – with its rich history in horror and unmatched promotional power – is probably ill-equipped to give Zombie's schlock fest (an homage to films like *Last House on the Left* and *I Spelt on Your Grave*) the justice it deserves.

Universal may owe a debt to horror, but horror has changed a lot since the early days. Which may go a long way to explaining why Ben Chapman languishes in the adoration of three generations of adults, adolescents and children at horror conventions across the continent. Though Chapman was never credited for his role as the titular Creature from the Black Lagoon, he is the picture perfect spokesman for Universal's classic age of horror. A kinder, more affable gentleman you won't meet and, now at seventy-two years of age, Chapman heartily embodies a time when horror films meant double bills and popcorn, not gouged eyeballs and corpse defilement.

The irony, of course, is Rob Zombie's continued admonition that Universal's horror films – and the monster movie culture it created – was the inspiration of his youth. It doesn't take much to see that Universal's disapproval of Zombie's film bears comparison to Victor Frankenstein's plight, who, after gazing at the monster he had created, was overcome with revulsion and fear.

Whether Universal will ever regret missing the boat on *House of 1000 Corpses* is a moot point. They clearly did not understand it and probably couldn't cope with it if they did. But they did understand *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, and they gave them to us, God bless 'em.

-RG

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The board is nicely manufactured with artwork inspired by early graveyards in and around Salem, and some illustrations directly derived from the gravestones. Aside from the heavy cemetery vibe, makers of this otherworldly gameboard have made sure there's plenty of room for movement: 11" X 17" inches worth of space, to be precise.

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A vertical collage of seven black and white photographs of celebrities. From top to bottom: 1. Madonna in a dark, textured outfit with the word 'TRAUMA' visible. 2. Britney Spears in a dark, low-cut dress with a large 'B' logo. 3. Madonna in a dark, textured outfit. 4. Britney Spears in a dark, low-cut dress. 5. Madonna in a dark, textured outfit. 6. Britney Spears in a dark, low-cut dress. 7. Madonna in a dark, textured outfit.

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BEN CHAPMAN THE CREATURE LIVES!

by Mike Michalski



The year is 1954 and a halcyon haze hovers over North America. The Korean War is a fast-fading memory. The middle class swells in the midst of high employment and rising wages. Yet beyond the veneer, the face of prosperity wears beads of nervous perspiration – for it is also the age of unprecedented fear. The United States detonates the first hydrogen bomb and launches the first atomic submarine; the Army-McCarthy hearings bring fear of the red menace to the forefront; The threat of war at unprecedented levels looms heavy over the collective populace. And Hollywood stands grinning, all too eager to exploit the nightmares. Gone were the days of *Frankenstein*, *Dracula* and the *Mummy* –

by this time reduced to comedic bit parts in various Abbott and Costello pictures. The Invisible Man? Vanished. The Wolfman? Tamed. The Bride? Banished.

Instead, in came the deformed enormities and alien invaders from above: *The Thing From Another World* (1951); *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951); *Invasion From Mars* (1953); *War of the Worlds* (1953). Amid it all, there swam a monster so powerful – so memorable – it lives, and lurks, even today.

Against all odds and fashions in 1954, Universal managed to squeeze one more iconic image out of its monster-making machine – the tale of the mysterious Amazonian Gill Man – who, rather than descend-

ing from space or mutating out of an accident of human ignorance, emerged instead from the depths of our prehistoric past, energized a sagging studio and endeared himself to millions worldwide. *The Creature From the Black Lagoon* was born, ensnaring horror fans in his webbed grip of wonderment – a grip he has yet to release nearly 50 years later.

"If you look at the (Universal Monster) logo, they have this arc beginning with Frankenstein, and I know I'm second from the right," admits the man behind, or rather, inside the Gill Man: 72-year-old Ben Chapman, a native Tahitian born in Oakland, CA who parlayed a Polynesian-style song and dance act into eventually playing the origi-

"People were screaming and I knew that meant we got it! We never had a bad review, but then again, 47 years later, little did we know it would be bigger than what it was then."

-Ben Chapman

nal Creature. "I'm very honoured to be included in that for sure. I feel blessed."

Filed for just a touch over \$600,000, the 3-D *Creature From the Black Lagoon* was both a critical and commercial success for Universal. From the moment the movie debuted, both cast and crew knew they had a hit on their hands - though just how memorable it would be was beyond anyone's wildest imaginations. Having not witnessed any dailies during filming, Chapman remembers viewing the film for the first time with a fellow Universal contractee, Race Gentry.

"We went to the Pickwood Theatre on Westwood and Pico in west Los Angeles," he recalls, "and I sat there with my popcorn, hotdogs, Coke and 3-D glasses - just like everybody else. And people were screaming and I knew that meant we got it! We never had a bad review, but then again, 47 years later, little did we know it would be bigger than what it was then."

Creature From the Black Lagoon was directed by Jack Arnold, who one year earlier had directed another Universal hit, *It Came From Outer Space*, also filmed in 3-D. Chapman said seeking Arnold's advice prior to shooting led to a deeper understanding of the role itself and the significance attached to it.

"[Arnold] said: 'don't make him into a cartoon,'" he recalls. "I finally solved it one night, it was beauty and the beast. The tough thing was, I couldn't use any facial expressions, so I had to use body language. I suppose they worked out for me - because it's still here."

Not to say that Chapman immediately became the quintessential modern merman, however, either in his mind or in the mind of director Arnold. He admits he had some apprehensions about donning the mossy green and gold attire of the half-amphibian, half-man monster when he first saw it.

"I thought, 'Oh God, I'm going to play a weird science fiction guy or horror guy, whatever you want to call him,'" says the 6'-5" Chapman. Arnold had wanted the creature to "glide on land," but Chapman had difficulty achieving exactly what he wanted. The director was forced to solve the problem in a creative way.

"He said, 'I've put ten pounds of lead weights in your feet' so I couldn't lift them!" laughs Chapman. "It was the original moon-walk, only forward."

The costume, dubbed "Beastie" on the set, was made from a plaster of Paris mold of Chapman's body. The foam rubber-like exterior was sewn onto a one-piece body stocking including gloves and boots.

"It was very delicate getting in," says the actor. "If you look at the dorsal fin, there was a zipper all the way up to the helmet off. I would actually get into it like you would with long johns except my feet were covered. You had to be very careful to make sure there were no creases. I think there were about five different suits. In case something happened, you could just peel it off and put on another one. Fortunately, we never had to do that."

"It fit like an outer layer of my skin," he adds, noting that once the two to three-hour process of applying the suit was completed, there was no time to remove it for the necessities of life. "You'd come in early in the morning with a magazine and sit down. No roughage, no coffee, nothing like that."

Three sets of eyes were used during the approximately eight weeks of shooting, each with varying degrees of vision according to the camera's proximity to the Gill Man. For close-ups, the entire eye was painted over with Chapman left to maneuver through the takes by following the flashlights held by crew members on the set.

The method proved troublesome, and even caused a few accidents: one take was cut when the Creature unceremoniously bounced co-star Julie Adams' head off one of the walls of the Gill Man's cave.

"I couldn't see where I was going and we walked right into a big boulder and she smacked her head," says Chapman. "She started kicking and I heard [Arnold] yelling 'Cut!' And I'm going 'What?' I had no idea."

Although credited to Bud Westmore (who headed the makeup department and regularly received sole credit on Universal projects), the suit was actually the product of several talents, including artist Millicent Patrick, veteran makeup artist Jack Kevan, sculptor Chris Mueller, painter Tom Cise



Creature Days: Makeup men Jack Kevan (left) and Bud Westmore (right) help Chapman prepare for the role that would bring him eternal fame as the Reel Gill Man.

and assistant Bob Down. The suit reportedly cost \$18,000 and was the product of eight and a half months of research and experiment, including 76 body sketches, 32 head models and 176 pounds of foam rubber used through its creation. The result was one of the most original, chilling and enduring monster makeup effects in the history of film. Unlike many of his peers, the Creature has never really aged in the annals of horror. It is not surprising to hear Chapman say that putting it on for the first time was like undergoing a metamorphosis.

"It wasn't until they were finished creating the costume that they finally took me out on this little gurney and exposed me to the press," he notes. "When I finally looked at myself in the mirror and said, 'Oh my God! Look at him!' I thought he was beautiful in an eerie way. I didn't think of him as menacing."

Others, of course, hardly felt as comfortable. The Creature horrified and delighted audiences, cast and crew members alike, and Chapman took full advantage to play a few practical jokes during filming. In between takes, Chapman would linger in the water on the set, waiting for curious onlookers to venture into the "lagoon," hoping to catch a glimpse of the mysterious Amazonian anomaly.

"(Crew members) would call me in and say, 'Hey! Rock Hudson is bringing up some people to see you as the Gill Man,'" he recalls. "I would swim out to the middle of the man-made lake - it was only about six feet deep - and once I'd see Rock come up



Photo: Mike Mapples

The Man Behind the Monster: Chapman is perennial on the convention circuit. "Doing these shows – it's payback time," he says. Below: a copy of the original contract with Universal, in which it is made clear that the actor would not necessarily be credited for his work.

near the beach close to the shore, I would start moving closer like an alligator until I'm in about two feet of water. Then I would leap straight up in the air, RRAARRGH! After a few times they said to knock it off; they were afraid someone was going to die of a heart attack!"

Sadly, Chapman is near-certain that none of the original costumes are in existence today.

"Unless they took it at the time and locked it up into a temperature controlled room," he says. "But they just took them and threw them out."

It took three men to give life to the Gill Man as movie fans know him. Chapman was hired to play all the scenes above water while working with the movie's other stars, Richard Denning, Julia Adams and Richard Carlson at Universal Studios. Meanwhile, stunt doubles including Ricou Browning, simultaneously filmed the underwater sequences in Silver Springs, Florida under the lens of Scotty Webbourn.

Chapman also bowed to stuntman Al Wyatt on the scene in which the Gill Man is set ablaze. Chapman was told to act as if he was on fire and, later, Wyatt's image was post-produced into the final product.

"If you look closely at that scene going into the water, you'll see that the fire is actually superimposed on top of me," says the affable actor.

The Creature was Chapman's biggest role in Hollywood, although – as fate would have it – he was never credited on the actual film. But he says he isn't angry about that circumstance.

"They told me right off the bat – 'you're not going to get credit for it,'" reveals Chapman. "First of all there is going to be two of you, and we want to give the people the illu-

sion that the Gill Man was real. I went – 'You're telling me that you're going to make people believe that you went down to the Amazon, captured this creature, brought him up here and gave him acting lessons?'"

The practice was not new to Universal, who had credited the monster role in their seminal *Frankenstein* not to Boris Karloff (whose name would later be inseparable from the role), but to a series of question marks.

"When you're young like that and starting out in the business, you want to build as many film credits as you can," says Chapman, who was passed over on future and less popular incarnations of Universal's Creature. Chapman's friend, Tom Hennessey, landed the role for *Revenge of the Creature* and, later, it was given over to Don Megowan for a bulked-up version of the monster in *The Creature Walks Among Us*. Also, unlike the estates of his famous contemporaries, Chapman receives no royalties from the sale of any *Creature* movie or merchandise, despite the fact that the original mask bears the sculpted likeness of his actual face.

"It doesn't bother me," he says, "it belongs to Universal. I have nothing to do with it. They own it so I have nothing to say about it."

Fate had it that Chapman would appear as the Gill Man one more time, however, for a brief guest appearance on the *Abbott and Costello Colgate Comedy Hour*, along with Glenn Strange as the Frankenstein monster.

Similarly, his subsequent career bearkened back to his monster days with an appearance on an episode of *The Six Million Dollar Man* as an alien, in what he termed "more of a gag deal" for a friend whose wife was the casting director.

Nearly fifty years after his fateful appearance, the Creature has become a favourite among collectors of Universal Monster memorabilia; the image of the Gill Man has remained in the eyes and hearts of aficionados worldwide. From sought-after Aurora models in the '60s, up to Sideshow Toys' 8" figure today – the Creature's staying power is unquestioned. Decades before *Jaws* made people afraid to go into the water, the Gill Man gave swimmers something to keep them away from shore. Universal also recently re-released all three *Creature* movies with original box art as well as a DVD version of the first. The fervor is insatiable.

Now living in Hawaii with his long-time girlfriend, Merrilee Kazarian, Chapman has three children, Elyse Marie, Grant and Ben III. Following his retirement from the entertainment industry in the 1960s, he worked in several fields, including a job with the

Seven-Up Bottling Co. in Los Angeles and Hawaiian tourism and real estate. Recently, Chapman has become a regular on the horror convention circuit, despite erroneous reports of his death in the 1999 edition of Titan Books' *The Essential Movie Monster Guide* (the error attributed to a mix-up with another Ben Chapman who worked in the production side of Universal around the same time).

Hundreds of fans (dubbed "Gillies" by Chapman) regularly line

up for a chance to meet the charismatic actor who, similar to his character, now stands along with Browning as the sole living remnant to an extinct species – the actors behind the Universal Monsters. No one is ever turned away at a Chapman appearance, boasts the proud actor. Never has a dead man signed more autographs.

"Doing these shows – it's payback time," he beams. "It's up to me to pay back the fans: it's up to me to let them touch, hug and kiss. I always start off my shows by thanking all of the faithful fans. If it weren't for them, the Gill Man would have been dead and buried and forgotten a long time ago." ■



UNIVERSAL STUDIOS' CLASSIC MONSTER COLLECTION

DRACULA 1931

The first of the Universal's talkie horrors, it has probably suffered the most at the hands of time. What was once a groundbreaking, terrifying cinematic experience is now a stagey, largely dull undertaking, made memorable only by Lugosi's charismatic performance and Dwight Frye's more-over-the-top-than-thou hamming. You can almost feel cinematographer Karl Freund (Metropolis) struggling to escape Tod Browning's stylistic restraint, with little success. Far superior is the concurrently-lensed Spanish-language version (also included), which is everything its more famous cousin isn't—sexy, dynamic and dark, with only a less-than-stellar Dracula (Carlos Villarias) to drag it down. —Joseph O'Brien



FRANKENSTEIN 1931

Competing only with Dracula as filmland's most memorable creature, the Frankenstein monster went on to become one of the most recognized cultural icons of the 20th century. Director James Whale's visuals and Jack Pierce's amazing make-up go a long way in communicating the evils of dabbling with the unknown and the tragic flaws of men who put themselves in the place of God. Universal's DVD reissue is loaded with extras, so much so that the film itself seems almost secondary and, in fact, it has become secondary in the current cult of merchandise and memorabilia. *How Hollywood Made a Monster* is a lengthy documentary filled with absorbing commentary by the descendants of the cast as well as film historians. The DVD also comes with further commentary by historian Rudy Behlmer, an archive of old film posters and stills, web links, and more. —Aaron Lupton



BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN 1935

Dr. Frankenstein and his forlorn creation return in James Whale's cheeky 1935 follow-up to the original. Frankie wants some hanky panky and it's up to the Doc (Colin Clive), along with mad scientist Dr. Pretorius, to hack together a female creature for the monster. Hear! Frankenstein speak for the first time in glorious Dolby Digital. Seal The Monster search for love and friendship in full frame at a 1.33:1 ratio. Laugh! With Clive Barker, Rick Baker, Joe Dante et al in the bonus documentary *She's Alive! But whatever you do, don't pass up a chance to relive one of celluloid history's finest anomalies, a horror sequel most consider equal to, or better than, the original.* —Tom Dracogir



THE MUMMY 1932

Call it an Oedipus complex, but I love mummies. Whenever the Saturday TV matinee featured a bandaged bogeyman, I'd be there, stuffing my face with Quik and PB on crackers. This DVD reissue stars Boris Karloff, as the reanimated priest Im-Ho-Tep. Big K brings all the somber power to bear that he can, bless his should-have-been-enscinated heart, but regal bearing can't save the weak script and melodramatic plot points. And the special features are almost non-existent; the commentary consists of a running paraphrase of the actors' spoken lines (the language hasn't changed that much since the thirties). As for mummies, Im-Ho-Tep disappoints by doffing his bondage gear right after the first scene. —Eric Sparring



THE INVISIBLE MAN 1933

The Invisible Man marks Claude Rains' debut in film and was quite a gamble for him considering that he was either invisible or swathed in bandages for most of the film. The gamble paid off and Rains delivered a remarkable performance as a scientist who becomes a homicidal maniac the moment he uncovers the secret of invisibility. The film revolutionized special effects for the industry, as chronicled in the documentary included in Universal's DVD release. Every aspect of the movie and its participants is fleshed out entirely—bios, special effects, production foibles—in an alternate version of the film, that includes commentary courtesy of Rudy Behlmer.

—Mary-Beth Hollyer



THE WOLF MAN 1941

The only member of Universal's original monster squad played exclusively by one actor, the only one not based on a pre-existing literary source, and the only one never officially remade, *The Wolf Man* is Greek tragedy with teeth. Backed by a solid A-list cast (Claude Rains, Ralph Bellamy), the unfairly-maligned Lon Chaney Jr. imbues Lawrence Talbot with a strange sadness even before he's cursed with the bite of Gypsy werewolf Bela Lugosi. Screenwriter Curt Siodmek's largely-invented lycanthropic mythology is still mistaken for authentic folklore today, and his fatalistic tone carried through the remainder of Talbot's saga—*Frankenstein Meets The Wolf Man*, *House of Frankenstein* and *House of Dracula*. Weird love bomb: the full moon doesn't appear once in the whole film. —Joseph O'Brien



CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON 1954

Creature From the Black Lagoon benefits tremendously from being the most recent of these films, in that some of its creators and stars are still alive and well and willing to be interviewed. The extras here are pretty impressive, not least of which is a documentary featuring reminiscences from starlet Julia Adams, monster suit guys Ben Chapman and Ricou Browning and movie prop archivist extraordinaire Bob Burns (see *Ninth Circle* pg. 50). The Creature remains one of my own all-time favorite monster effects, and sequences detailing the costumes and make-up designs are particularly intriguing. The commentary track from historian Tom Weaver is great too, although it's pretty obvious that he's reading a script. —John W. Bowen



Forty years after FAMOUS MONSTERS arrived to change the lives of North America's youth, founding editor FORREST J. ACKERMAN is caught in a legal battle over his most famous creation.

FORREST J. ACKERMAN TROUBLE IN MONSTERLAND



by Rod Gudino

It's early March and it's raining in California, but somehow, the bad weather wears well on Forrest J. Ackerman. The eighty-four-year-old icon has brought his share of sullen clouds over the Hollywood Hills, only his were of the purely nostalgic sort, without which Hollywood, California would never have been turned into Horrorwood, Karloffonia, land of *Famous Monsters of Film-land*.

The amiable, bespectacled Ackerman, referred to as "Forry" by two generations of peers and fans, is also known by other, no less endearing sobriquets: Dr. Acula, Ack the Ripper, the Ackermomster. His home—the Ackermansion—rests snugly in Glendower, California bearing some 300,000 pieces of classic horror and sci-fi memorabilia (including the Tyrannosaurus from the original *King Kong*, 200 editions of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* novel and much too much more). There's plenty for horror film-land's genial grandfather to be cheerful about, despite the rain and the recent memory of a court battle that forced him to auction items from his collection and even mortgage his home.

A veteran of the industry, Ackerman is one of the most renowned names in Hollywood horror, even though he never starred in or directed or even produced a single film of Universal's classic horror period. What Ackerman did was revitalize Hollywood's classic horror films and their stars for new audiences, thereby hemming their place in the fabric of North American pop culture.

He achieved this through *Famous Monsters of Film-land*, a magazine published by James Warren and edited by Ackerman, which first appeared in 1958 to huge and unforeseen success. Although the magazine

was not the first of its type, it was clearly the best; with a gaggle of original puns, it targeted a young readership who had belatedly discovered the Universal Monster films in their second incarnation: as "creature features" on television.

FM's golden age was long and prosperous, but eventually came to an end in 1984.

Its legacy was revived, however, nine years later in 1993 when the title was relaunched by one Ray Ferry. Perhaps realizing that Ackerman was at the heart of the magazine's success, Ferry invited him to re-establish his role as *FM*'s wise-cracking editor. But the arrangement was rife with problems and Ackerman retired from the magazine in

1994. It was not until last year, after the two men ended up in court, that anyone realized just how bad things had gotten.

The Foery vs. Ferry affair was unexpected and bizarre; allegations of stalking and death threats

were pinned on the genial Ackerman, occasioning a host of genre veterans—John Landis, Ray Bradbury and Sara Karloff among them—to testify on his behalf.

On May 11 last year, a jury ruled in favour of Ackerman, but the onetime editor of *FM* is less than confident that the fight is finally over. While Ferry pursues his case in the appeals court, *Famous Monsters* continues its publishing run, even though, as one industry giant who wished to remain anonymous noted: "*FM* always reflected the spirit of Foery. It no longer does."



Forrest, can you tell me what the court dispute between you and Ray Ferry was really about?

I was after him for failing to pay me for four issues and underpaying me and calling himself Dr. Acula which I've been doing since before he was born. He had the magazine but he had no one to edit it, so I edited it for ten issues and finally the last four issues—after I hadn't been paid a penny and he was very insulting in public and said he hoped I realized how lucky I was to have him as a publisher, otherwise at my age I would be selling newspapers—I realized there was a problem. He was suing me for \$25 million for stalking. He said he was afraid to open his mailbox because there might be a bomb in it, and I don't even know how to make a firecracker! Then he claimed that windows were shot out of the back of his car but I don't even own a pop gun and then he said he had to get a bodyguard and he had to buy firearms to protect himself.

What were you awarded after the jury ruled in your favour?

At first the jury wanted to award me \$2 million, but there was one hold out so they chopped it down to \$1 million. And [Ferry] wasn't quite satisfied so it wound up at about three quarters of a million. But Ray has declared that if it takes his last dollar he will never give me a penny. I've had to mortgage my home for the legal bills and sacrifice all sorts of things in my collection and it just goes on and on.

What are your thoughts about the magazine still going under the auspices of Ray Ferry? Would you rather just see it laid to rest again, or continue?

Well, I kind of need him to go on and make money so he can pay me what I was awarded by the jury. But the magazine now is



Famous Monster: Ackerman, in the early days, sharing his love of the movies with Vincent Price. FM gave top billing to movies that were considered classics in the 1950s.

nothing but an incredible copycat. Just about everything I ever created, like "Karloffmania" and "Ack the Ripper" and so on, is in it. If half the words I ever created were left out of the magazine, it'd be about half the size.

Obviously people still associate you with Famous Monsters.

That's why the judge ordered Ray to quit signing the editorials "Dr. Acula," because everybody thinks that's me and I'm not doing that.

Famous Monsters went on for 190 issues total during your tenure. How did you make it last so long, considering it was a monster magazine that was essentially created around movies that were made years before?

There was a whole generation of kids who had never heard of Lon Chaney or *The Phantom of the Opera* or didn't know Boris Karloff made *Frankenstein* in 1931 and Bela Lugosi did *Dracula* the same year. So I was kind of educating and at the same time entertaining, bringing Halloween to the kids in the country.

What do you think is the biggest change from the classic monster movies to modern monster movies?

I just loved *The Green Mile* and I liked *Sleepy Hollow* a lot. I think the greatest change is in morphing; instead of Lon Chaney having to sit still for sixteen hours and changing into a wolf man, they just throw stuff like that away on TV commercials, things that would have been incredibly way back in the days. But the thing is

that with all of these new toys that they have, they kind of forget about a story with a beginning, middle and end that you really care about and remember. And we don't seem to be producing any more Karloffs or Lugosis or Peter Cushing.

Why do you think that is so?
I don't know, I'm baffled.

You think they would with the ongoing popularity of those names.

The only one who has a bit of that is Angus Scrimm, who's mainly been in minor movies as the Tall Man. When Christopher Lee goes, that will be the end of an era. Somebody called me and said they were redoing *Abominable Dr. Phibes* and when they submitted they wanted me to play the character. When Vincent Price was alive and they couldn't afford him, they sometimes got me for half price. I can't imagine that, at eighty-five, any studio is going to take a chance on me! [laughs]

Would you be open to doing it if the offer came through?

Well, I would but I could imagine this would take six months to a year out of my life, and then I'd be prancing all around the country doing interviews. I think it would be pretty strenuous at my age.

I understand your eighty-fifth birthday is just around the corner. How do you feel?
I'm in wonderful health, actually. The last check up I had they said I had the blood pressure of a teenager. Somewhere in the world, a teenager is missing his blood pressure and I have it! ☺



INFAMOUS MONSTERS

For those of you wondering what the "other side" of the story is, look no further than current FM publisher Ray Feny's *Life Is But A Scream! The True Story of the Birth of Famous Monsters of Filmland*. Although the book does a fair job of chronicling Feny's takeover of the FM masthead, its chief concern is to exact a 400 page character assassination of Forrest J. Ackerman, whom Feny portrays as an insufferable egomaniac.

In all fairness, it is obvious that Ackerman has made a few unfortunate mistakes in the name of fandom, and that his old-school approach to business leaves something to be desired. And what that something is, Feny elaborates with all the gruesome detail he can muster.

Not surprisingly, the biggest problem with Feny's book is Feny himself. If we were to take his book at face value, we would conclude that he is a man of unquestionable integrity who was nonetheless maligned by many of Ackerman's friends and, indeed, a good portion of the science fiction and horror community at large, and who was ultimately the victim of a jury's "collective fog" and a Judge of "questionable legality." Aside from admitting that he may have been a little too blunt with Feny and that he once lost his temper in court, Feny paints himself with a very generous brush, complaining that his major faults are his tendency to trust people too much and his inability to get "the hang of" holding a grudge. Oddly, he seems genuinely dumbfounded by the hostility that assails him at every turn. At some point, having an answer for everything ceases to be a good thing.

Less convincing is that, while complaining that Ackerman's case against him was fueled by hatred and gossip, Feny proves himself to be adept at doing the same; to accuse Ackerman of having a big ego is one thing, but it's entirely another to insinuate that people such as Mark Carducci may have committed suicide as a result of having become "despondent after having ingested so much of Feny's hot air."

Feny calls Ackerman a lot of names, and his unfattering anecdotes on everyone from Jim Warren and Basil Gogos to Gene Simmons from KISS. In the final analysis, *Life Is But A Scream!* is a less-than-glorified look at what will inevitably be remembered as the disquieting period in FM's long history. Tellingly, Feny never describes it quite like that.

—Ennea Anderson

Although his work for FAMOUS MONSTERS was sporadic, the reign of Basil "The Great" Gogos was never disputed by regular readers of the magazine. Here, Gogos looks back on the technique that made him famous and a body of work that, in the end, he wasn't allowed to keep.

BASIL GOGOS MASTER OF LIGHT, MASTER OF SHADOW

by Rod Gudino

If *Famous Monsters of Filmland* made horror cool, it was Basil Gogos who raised it to the level of fine art. As one of the names to be regularly found on *FM*'s masthead, Gogos became the magazine's prize illustrator. His portraits – steeped in gloomy shadows and set ablaze with fiery colours – were unlike anything anyone had ever seen before, especially in an era of black and white movies.

Gogos' portraits, however, relied on more than mere colour for effect: Chaney's Phantom, Chaney Jr.'s Wolf Man, Karloff's Frankenstein, Lugosi's Dracula and Vincent Price's Dr. Phibes were captured in all their macabre glory, and yet these portraits also revealed the vulnerability and humanity beneath the deformities. Gogos' ability to get inside the monsters revealed a talent that other artists found impossible to imitate.

"I always felt these creatures were vulnerable and helpless to a degree and that compassion had to be added to the portraits," says the New York-based artist, who insists that colour continues to be his forte. It was, in fact, his revolutionary use of colour that made his artwork a favourite of *Famous Monsters* publisher James Warren and editor Forrest Ackerman, not to mention the magazine's readership.

"What I did with many of the monster portraits was that I envisioned the head being lit by four different coloured lights from the front," he explains. "I had, say, a reddish light from the bottom which turns into blue which turns into green and orange on the other side. I had four lights working on the face which all merged together but without violating the form. It's so strange to talk about it now because it's a very delicate matter to merge one light into the other and not lose its identity. It was a challenge for me, but a challenge which I think I have met."

Fans agreed, and proved to Warren that they recognized and adored Gogos' work when issues featuring his covers regularly



Monster With a Heart: A new rendition of *Vgor* from *Bride of Frankenstein* and (*left*), Gogos makes his *FM* debut in November 1960.

sold out. Even from his earliest covers, the effect was stunning. Gogos' first assignment for *FM* (eventually published in issue #9) was a treatment of Vincent Price from his role in Roger Corman's 1960 film *House of Usher*.

"In that particular case, I didn't know how to get bright colours enough because Jim wanted something really weird, you know. I decided what I would do first is use coloured ink so I could get more brilliance, and then add black here and there in the final coat to make it really sing. So I used dyes in the beginning and I used to wash one colour over the other. Incidentally, that painting doesn't

exist anymore – most of it has faded away because dye is not permanent."

Despite the success of that cover, and his second assignment for *FM* #10 (the Claude Rains *Phantom of the Opera*), Gogos continued to hone his strategies with colour to better his results. He realized early that his success at managing colour did not guarantee that his finished artwork would translate well on the covers which, of course, were reproductions.

"It was something that puzzled everyone, including myself," he says, "until I started to analyze the printer's inks. I decided that I'd use whatever the printer used, so that when



"I always felt these creatures were vulnerable and helpless to a degree and that compassion had to be added to the portraits."

they reproduced the pictures, I was always within their colour range. If I used a shocking pink, for example, the printer could not reproduce that because he didn't use a shocking pink ink. So I'd stay within the perimeter of the colouring."

Despite all the meticulous planning, Gogos says that most of his work for *Famous Monsters* – along with his artwork on Warren's other titles (*Creepy*, *Eerie*, *Spacemen* and *Wildest Westerns*) – was frequently rushed. Nevertheless, his output managed to become just as classic as the monster films which they depicted, an undisputed testament to his talent.

Gogos' work for *Famous Monsters* managed to make him a star of the horror genre, but the artist left the magazine empty-handed when he finally departed in the late 1970s.

"Jim Warren kept them all – he never wanted to part with them," he says of his portraits. "I do believe that Ackerman had a lot of them and they're owned by a lot of other people. I only have one, but I think it's the best one; the Frankenstein memorial with a candle. I do have the original and it's as fresh and new as the day I painted it. That's my pride and joy."

The gregarious Gogos says there is no love lost between him and the publisher, whom he credits as having given him his first big break.

"Yes I do miss my bobbies," he chuckles, "and I wish I had them, of course, but I know many of them are in good hands."

Following his time at *FM*, Gogos disappeared from the horror landscape, and it has only been recently that his name and his unmistakable touch has cropped up, notably on the album covers of two Misfits albums (*American Psycho* and the aptly-titled *Famous Monsters*), as well as on Rob Zombie's top selling *Hellbilly Deluxe*.

Today, Gogos can be found at the offices of a major New York design agency, working on storyboards for television commercials. Although he says that he finds his work satisfying and challenging, he reveals that he has recently returned, in his spare time, to his first love.

"I'm beginning to paint again and I'm slowly getting into monster art and will not quit doing it because I find them very relaxing," he says. "As a matter of fact, it's the only commercial art entity that I really enjoy."

Gogos has recently completed a striking portrait of Nosferatu as portrayed by Max Schreck in the 1922 film, as well as Bela Lugosi's Ygor from *Son of Frankenstein* (1939) and Conrad Veidt as the leering *Man Who Laughs* (1927). Currently finishing up yet another portrait based on the original Frankenstein, Gogos says that he is devoted to the early classic period of horror and has no plans on exploring any of its decidedly nastier modern incarnations.

"Horror movies today go for viciousness and what's totally ugly," he says. "The human element has gone out of it, that's why I don't like them as much. Yes they are very, very exciting and they keep you at the edge of your seat but, nevertheless, to me, they lack the romance that the old ones had." ■

The King is back !!

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www.basilgogos.com





Bela G. Lugosi Jr.

www.belalugosi.com

The man who started it all, actor Bela Lugosi (1882-1956) was Universal Studios' first-ever monster and that role won him fame and fortune that lasted well beyond his lifetime. In an ironic twist of fate, however, Lugosi is the last of the original horror stars to make it into the lucrative market of modern merchandising. Today, Bela Lugosi's career and likeness are the property of Bela G. Lugosi Jr., his son. Remarkably, Lugosi Jr. only last year announced an agreement with Universal Studios

FROM HALLOWEEN COSTUMES TO VODKA, UNIVERSAL'S CLASSIC MONSTERS HAVE BECOME BIG BUSINESS FOR THE FAMILIES OF ITS LEADING STARS.

Consumer Products Group to develop merchandise using his father's likeness in his role as Dracula—sixty-nine years after the movie was released.

"I was a busy practicing lawyer most of my life," Lugosi Jr. told *Rue Morgue*. "Starting in 1993 I devoted a great deal of time to the Three Stooges and not much to my dad. I left the Stooges property at the end of '99 and then I started working on Dad's stuff. So I've only been working on it for a year and three months, but I think I've accomplished a lot in that time."

He says there are about a dozen merchandising licenses that are either signed or in negotiations, including an agreement with Sideshow Toys (who are releasing an 8" and a 12" Bela Lugosi Dracula figure later this year, as well as a figure based on Lugosi's Ygor from *Son of Frankenstein* and *Murder Legends* from *White Zombie*). Also in development are model kits, a line of Italian high fashion designer clothing, goth jewelry, perfume, cologne and a branded line of Halloween accessories.

In addition, Lugosi Jr. says that he is overseeing a new Dracula novel, which he hopes will be out by October of this year and which he expects to eventually option as a movie. Also in development: a set of DVDs of his father's public domain films with new material added (such as interviews and photos), and a self-published colour comic book that retells the traditional Dracula story using the templates from

the original Universal horror film.

Born near the western border of Transylvania, Bela Blasko was reared in the town of Lugos, a name he would later take as his own. In 1927, he landed the title role in the stage version of *Dracula*, which proved to be a huge hit. Universal Studios decided Lugosi would be the best bet for their film, and continued casting the star in horror roles well into the late '40s.

Though *Dracula* was clearly his one great role, Lugosi's career enjoyed several other high points, including the atmospheric *White Zombie*, the Callaghan-esque *Murders in the Rue Morgue* and an astounding performance in *Island of Lost Souls*. He fell into desecration toward the end of his life, however, largely because of his addiction to morphine and his association with Ed Wood Jr., with whom he was to make *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, a timeless top contender for the worst movie ever made.

That infamy was played up with the 1994 film *Ed Wood* by Tim Burton, which won Martin Landau an Academy Award for his portrayal of the late star just prior to his death at age seventy-three.

"Ed Wood has a lot of mischaracterizations and inaccuracies about Dad," says Lugosi Jr., adding that he agrees that Landau's performance was exceptional. Not surprisingly, he also reveals he has no immediate plans to license his father's likeness as it appeared in any of Wood's films.

—Rod Gudio

KARLOFF ENTERPRISES www.karloff.com

"What I most remember about my father is his humour and his integrity," says Sara Karloff, referring to a man who, for legions of movie viewers, embodied the monsters of their earliest nightmares. From *Frankenstein* and the *Mummy* to the *Ghoul* and *Tower of London's* *Mord the Executioner*, Karloff was—along with Bela Lugosi—horror film's first star.

Perhaps that is why she's keen to point out that while Universal owns the movies in which her late father starred, she owns the rights to his universally recognized name and likeness. That particular privilege is its own full-time job with an office in California (Karloff Enterprises).

"We get a lot of regular mail from people, we have a website [www.karloff.com], we do a couple of shows a year, we do interviews, licensing and the phone never stops ringing," says the late star's daughter, who inherited sole rights to the Karloff estate with the passing of her stepbrother in 1983. "Everyday is completely different."

Born William Henry Pratt in England in 1887, Boris Karloff left a remarkable legacy in radio and on the stage, not to mention in over 170 films (*Frankenstein*, in 1931, was his eighty-first film). He is best-remembered, of course, for his many roles in Univer-

sally's horror films, the first American company to seriously devote its energies to establishing the genre. Though none of his other work would equal the success of *Frankenstein* and its sequel, his career is one of the most successful in horror.

Testament to the enduring popularity of the Karloff name are the companies which clamor to use it: from alcoholic beverages (Absolut Karloff) and NASCAR racing cars to Halloween masks and costumes and a virtually endless stream of toys and figurines, Karloff has never been as marketable as he is today.

"My dad used to say that Halloween was his busy season and October is still the busiest season, but it's year-round," says Karloff, of new and continuing projects. Later this year, she expects to unveil a new figure based on her father's role as *Mad Monster* in *Mad Monster Party*, as sculpted by talented artist Tony Titano. A staple at Chiller Theatre in Jersey, Karloff says that it's the fans who have kept her father's legacy alive throughout the years.

"I think the gentleness of his own persona came through in whatever roles he portrayed," she says, "and this has obviously spoken to a lot of people."

—Emma Anderson



Chaney Entertainment

www.lonchaney.com

Like Fathers Like Son: Ron Chaney dons makeup for The Phantom Rider

In the annals of horror there are precious few names that have the resonance that the Chaney name has. That is because Chaney can be found in the earliest and most renowned epoch of horror filmmaking: the silents. Chaney's image provided us with Erik's hideous visage in *Phantom of the Opera*, the ghoulish stalker of London After Midnight and the hideously deformed Hunchback of Notre Dame, to name but a few.

Chaney's pioneering work as a makeup artist and craftsmanship as an actor came to an end with his death in 1930, but his name would enjoy a second wave of popularity in the work of his son, Lon Chaney Jr., whose role in *The Wolf Man* graduated it into Universal's newer line of movie fandom.

Although all of that is history (living history, perhaps, but history nonetheless), it looks like the Chaney name may have yet another resurgence

in the person of Ron Chaney, grandson to Chaney Jr. and the current administrator of the family's entertainment heritage and estate.

Ron Chaney is one of the few classic film descendants who has aspirations in film. He has made his intentions known, most formally, with the 1999 change of his company's name (from Chaney Enterprises to Chaney Entertainment), to reflect his growing interest in feature film production. Obviously, he says, Chaney Entertainment is out to make lower budget independent monster films.

"I would have to say that our films would be a throwback to the old style," Chaney told *Rue Morgue*. "We would benefit from the technology of today but bring back the classic horror's emphasis on storyline and getting away from a lot of blood, gore and special effects and that type of thing. Our scripts are more suggestive and psychological."

On the burner is a movie based on a script written by his grandfather - Lon Chaney Jr. - called *The Gila Man*, which was developed in the 1960s but never completed. As well, Chaney is developing a film which he co-wrote called *Curse of the Wolf Man*.

"I can't necessarily say it's a sequel to *The Wolf Man* but there's certainly a tie-in to it in the storyline," he says.

Chaney Entertainment's main project, however, is called *The Phantom Rider*, and it is based on a script which he himself wrote and which he describes as a "Civil War/western horror film". The multi-talented Chaney has already developed the monster makeup for the phantom, and expects to star in the titular role.

"We've shot a teaser of what the story is about while we were looking for investors," he says, "but I never really heard back from the studios which was disappointing. But I'd like to offer it to Universal, if they ever actually take the time to look at it. If not, then we're prepared to go our own way."

-Vulvula Wirck



THE FRIENDLY MONSTERS

Although the Universal monsters had outlived their ability to frighten as early as 1948, they never really disappeared. Instead, *Dracula* popped up in the late 1960s as a muppet on *Sesame Street* and *Frankenstein* became the lead in a goofy television sitcom called *The Munsters*.

Indicative of this new trend was the introduction, in 1971, of General Mills' monster cereals: Count Chocula and Franken Berry. That General Mills claim their cereals were not inspired by Universal's monsters is more indicative of the extent of cultural appropriation of the *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* images in popular media than actual fact. General Mills developed the concept for the cereals with an eye to creating a cast of "friendly monsters" or, to put it better, family-friendly versions of two of the most popular Universal monster archetypes.

"I know it's a bit of an oxymoron, but kids loved the fact that, unlike the creepy creatures they imagined were lurking under their beds and in their closets, these monsters were actually approachable and harmless," says Liv Lane, spokesperson for General Mills.

In response to respectable sales, General Mills launched three more monster-inspired cereals: Boo Berry, Baron Von Redberry and Frail Bruite, between 1972 and 1975. Alas, Redberry and Bruite were axed from the line because "they just didn't perform as well" as the Count, Franken and Boo, who can still be found on supermarket shelves today.

Other cereal-related products came and went, including three 33" RPM records (*Count Chocula Goes to Hollywood*, *The Monsters Go Disco*, *Monsters Adventures in Outer Space*), *Monster Catch* kits based on each character, and monster wretches and coloring books. Though these products are long gone, General Mills and Funko Inc. revived the cereal product-line last year with the introduction of Count Chocula and Franken Berry Wacky Wobblers and a Boo Berry bank, available for purchase at your friendly neighborhood specialty gift store.

-Mary-Beth Hollyer



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Zerkow, *The Witch's Dungeon* ghastly hostess (inset) and real host Hul with a recreation of his great uncle in makeup for *Werewolf of London*

Anyone who has ventured into Bristol, New Hampshire since the early seventies would have heard of *The Witch's Dungeon*, now the largest running classic horror museum in the U.S. Officially launched in 1966, *The Witch's Dungeon* started off as a hobby for Courtlandt Hull, then a thirteen-year-old boy whose great uncle happened to be Henry Hull, of *Werewolf of London* fame. In homage to his uncle and his own love of the horror classics, Hull gradually developed his idea and turned it, over the years, into a one-of-a-kind Halloween attraction.

"I wasn't totally satisfied with 8" Aurora model kits, I wanted the full size," laughs a still exhilarated Hull. "That's where it all started. At that time

The Witch's Dungeon

www.witchsdungeon.com

any wax museum you went to didn't have the classic horror show. They would have a chamber of horrors but it was all about torture, it wasn't about the films. *The Witch's Dungeon* was based on the movies—that was where the difference was."

No surprise that the new millennium finds Hull continuing to develop what has become his life's work. His newest plans involve relaunching *The Witch's Dungeon* as a museum of movie technology and history.

"It's going to be about how movies are made," he says; "the artistry of makeup and special effects—that's where the main focus is going to be. It's going to be bigger and we're going to have recreated scenes from the movies like what we already have, but on a more expanded scale. The museum will virtually take us from the horror and science fiction films of the silent era right up until the '70s."

Already boasting an enviable collection of original movie props (a Metaluna Mutant head from *This Island Earth*, Herman Munster's head-piece as worn by Fred Gwyn and all the original Planet of the Apes makeup appliances, to name a

few), Hull expects to reopen the newly-named *Witch's Dungeon Movie Museum* in the fall of 2002 in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

"When this is opened it will run year-round," he says, "and it will encompass more than just horror, it will also include science fiction and fantasy."

In its rich history, *The Witch's Dungeon* has attracted innumerable fans and has been heavily supported by some of the genre's top names, including Vincent Price, Sara Karloff, Ron Chaney, Bela Lugosi Jr., Mark Hamill and Dick Smith, among many others. Hull has been awarded for his efforts in preserving not just movie memorabilia, but the heritage of the classic monster films. A lifelong film fan, he lectures in makeup and effects at a college in Bristol.

"There's something timeless about all of it, almost like a fairy tale or a fantasy," he says. "The classic films are in a class by themselves. That's what makes them unique and that's why they seem to last. Just like Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, they're never really dated."

-Rod Gudino

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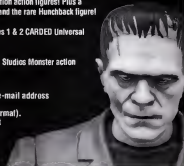
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RAMMSTEIN



by Gregorius Chant

RESH



"Germany has a much darker side than America," says Richard Kruspe-Bernstein (left)

The Rammstein Air Base is located in the Rhineland-Pfalz region of Germany, ten minutes from the city of Kaiserslautern. Once unknown to the world, it became the grisly toast of North American "real TV" after an airshow disaster was captured on video. The footage shows a team of seven jets as they swoove through the blue sky above the airbase to the delight of a large crowd of astonished onlookers. Then suddenly, something goes terribly wrong; a mid-air collision sends one of the planes careening into the crowd in a ball of fire and burning metal.

Although guitarist Richard Z. Kruspe-Bernstein denies that his band took their name — Rammstein, with an added "m" — from that tragic 1988 event, his music seems to contradict him: Rammstein is the sound of metal-industrial music ripping and burning its way through living flesh.

"What we tried to do was merge machines with music," explains Kruspe-Bernstein of his band's original concept in 1994. "But it was real music we wanted, the type of songs that you can really play with honest kinds of arrangements."

To wit, Rammstein's sound is defined by the relentless rhythms of guitarists Kruspe-Bernstein and Paul Landers, the cavernous growl of vocalist Till Lindemann, the pounding combination of drum and bass courtesy

of Christoph Schneider and Oliver Riedel, and the bizarre sampling of keyboardist Flake Lorenz. Wearing demonic contact lenses, ashen coloured hair, proto-military outfits, Rammstein turn a typical stage into a nightmare opera of outrageous antics, pyrotechnics and choreographed lechery — a far cry from the utopian fantasies pioneered by their German brethren Kraftwerk, whom Rammstein covered with a decidedly dystopic version of *Das Model*.

"It always seems to me that dystopia follows utopia," says Kruspe-Bernstein, speaking through an interpreter. "Maybe on a subliminal or subconscious level we're bringing in that element."

Although Rammstein began by making a name for themselves in their native Germany, the band was officially introduced to North America through David (Blue Velvet) Lynch, who included two of the group's songs on the soundtrack to his dark surrealist film *Lost Highway*. *Schwarz*, Rammstein's North American debut, was a huge hit with the songs *Du Hast* (You Have) and *Engel* (Angel) shredding the airwaves with a violent hybrid of razor sharp riffs, monolithic song structures and unmistakable Gothic melancholia.

"I think the basic motivation for creating music has always been pain and suffering," notes Kruspe-Bernstein. "When you're sad

or at a loss or when you're looking for friends or a way out, that's when you need to express yourself, and for me that's music."

He also ascribes Rammstein's sombre countenance to the fact that the bandmembers grew up behind the Berlin wall.

"For twenty-five years we were not allowed to travel anywhere, we were locked up inside the country," he says. "I think that's part of our personality, that's part of who we are. And maybe that sense of being locked in, that's still there and that can be felt in the music."

Mutter, their newest album (see page 57 for review), emphasizes the Gothic horror elements that have lurked in Rammstein's music from the very beginning. The album is replete with traumas cloaked in the imagery of childhood nightmares, notably on songs like *Sonne*, *Mutter* and *Spöck*.

"I had an extreme childhood," explains the founder/guitarist. "What we're trying to do is to cope with these things, with the music and in our lyrics."

Judging by their content, the same could be said of Rammstein's videos, with their muscled melodies coloured black with snippets of spine-chilling horror. In a way, it seems apropos; Germany's fascination with dread has dominated their films dating back to the early horrors of *Nosferatu* and the propaganda films of the war years. Is Rammstein just following a great national tradition?

"The question of why do you create art, music or films, it always has to do with the country you're in and even its climate — that influences your entire life," says Kruspe-Bernstein. "Take Berlin for example: eighty percent of Berlin is grey. The sun is an important factor in everybody's life; if there is no sun, you get depressed, and when you get depressed, you start thinking about all kinds of other depressing things and you write about them."

"Of course we've seen films like *Nosferatu* and others, but we don't use them actively in creating our image — we don't really copy them in any way. I think that Europe and in particular Germany has a much darker side than North America. Obviously, Europe has a lot more history than the US and Canada and quite a bit of that has been very dark." ■



RAMMSTEIN

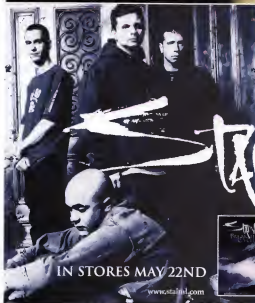
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BY DONALD SIMMONS

BLOOD REIGN - CURSE OF THE YOMA ADV Films - 80 minutes/Dual Language DVD

Once again, feudal Japan is being overrun with demons, but unlike other recent entries in this genre, *Blood Reign* is a direct hit with a great story, strong atmosphere and lots of style. After the master of a ninja clan is murdered (apparently by the undead), Hikage, a young ninja, is ordered to find and kill his childhood friend Marou. Marou has fled for unknown reasons and must be prevented from revealing the master's death to anyone, or else the clan may come under attack. Hikage sets out, but finds himself crossing paths with all manner of ghosts and monsters; he realizes he must find Marou's connection to them, and stop the dead from rising once and for all.

Previously known as *Curse of the*

Undead Yoma, *Blood Reign* offers the complete story once available on two 40-minute videos, now on DVD in its entirety. Hikage's search for Marou is the main thread throughout, but entwined within it is a ghost story involving a mysterious village where only travelers live, the fate of Hikage's ninja clan, and a romance between Hikage and a female ninja - not to mention severed heads, giant spiders, and babies crawling from the earth.

We all know that ghost stories are all about atmosphere, and *Blood Reign* works well because it takes the time to subtly develop the characters and the situations prior to bringing on the ninja action. Rather than being dropped on our laps right off the

bat, the story slowly unravels, as Hikage pursues Marou. Hikage himself comes across as a character we can believe; he's good in a fight because he takes the time to prepare for it, and he grows during the months of his search (though his ninja brothers unfortunately do not).

The only real weakness in the entire script is that the final confrontation is somewhat clichéd, but everything else - including the English voice acting - truly is first rate (although, as always, I prefer the subtitling). Five bloody swords out of five.



MASQUERADE: ETERNAL LIFE Anime 18 - 60 minutes/English Language

Nineteen-year-old Gen's life has been changing a lot lately. His mother just died, he's starting college, he's troubled by a recurring dream of a beautiful woman he doesn't recognize, and he's going to live with his grandmother, whom he never knew existed before.

And then it gets strange.

His wheelchair-bound grandmother always wears a mask (to hide past injuries, she says), and every room in the house is adorned with all varieties of them. The maid, who gives new meaning to the word *démure*, nonetheless mentions in passing that she's 416 years-old, and always handles up when it's sunny outside. At college,

Gen stumbles into the woman of his dreams, and comes to realize she resembles someone else in his life. A research-crazed foreign student bugs the house (and him) because she believes his family holds the secret to immortality....

When you pick up an Anime 18 title, about the only thing you expect from it is the cartoons getting it on in triple X detail. *Masquerade* has that alright, but it's the rarest sort - sex that actually advances the plot! After each encounter, Gen ends up more confused than ever about the people around him, and the changes occurring within him. The family immortality, it seems, isn't for everyone.

These first two episodes (concluding two episodes to come) set up the mystery of Gen's family and his fate with genuine twists and turns, hints dropped and bigger mysteries unveiled. The animation features some wonderfully detailed backgrounds and character designs (which is what you'd expect from Masaki Kajishima, best known for the *Tenchi Muyo* series). The biggest problem with the show is the English voices: Gen starts out talking in a monotone, and while he improves and the others aren't as bad, it's an irritating distraction from the story.

Nevertheless, *Masquerade* holds up as an adult title that is actually for adults, full of turn-of-the-screw suspense and lots of steamy eye candy. If you spend your money on adult anime, this one will give you your money's worth.



BLUE SEED ADV Films Seven 25-minute episodes/Dual Language DVD

Momiji thinks she's just an average high-school country girl who longs to see Tokyo, despite the fact that her grandmother keeps making comments about her "destiny" (always a loaded word in anime). This changes when she finds out she has a twin sister (now vanished) and that she is the Kushinada, the descendant of a princess with the power to seal a bunch of plant-based demons, the Aragami, out of the world (as long as she doesn't mind dying to do it).

In short order she meets up with the TAC, a special team of government demon hunters (composed of single-minded misfits), more Aragami than you can wave a tentacle at, and Kusanagi, a half-Aragami created by them as her protector (her death means their defeat, remember). But Kusanagi is now working with his own agenda.

Blue Seed is a horror/adventure TV series (with a dash of comedy as well), and it gets the deluxe treatment with this DVD release. Not only do you get seven episodes per disk, you get the "omake" extras (short vignettes ranging from the serious to the ridiculous). While it starts out seemingly as just another defeat-the-demon-every-episode show (and the first few episodes are monotonous), don't be fooled! After the initial set-up, the development of the characters and the unfolding of the plot gets more and more Byzantine as events wind to a final showdown.

Blue Seed's got gross monsters, cute girls and big guns being fired by cute girls. It's also got thrills, chills, and laughs. Get it and enjoy.

Dreadlines.

News Highlights  Horror Happenings

Stephen King's poetry comes to the red screen

Stephen King really does enjoy privileges that most writers only dream about. The man who has become an industry unto himself will be setting yet another milestone with the upcoming release of a short movie based around a poem he wrote fifteen years ago. The eight-minute film is based on King's 100-line poem *Paranoid*: A Chant which appeared in the pages of the author's *Skeleton Crew* anthology published in 1986. With the King moniker attached (*Stephen King's Paranoid*), the short will enjoy a much publicized internet release in the summer of 2001.

The wheels of production began turning when upstart director Jay Holben found some time in his busy schedule to produce a short film. *Paranoid* was ideal for his purposes.



Director Holben says he cast a female lead to "throw people off balance."

"I knew I would only have one day to shoot something," Holben told *Rue Morgue*. "I wanted a very strong story that would allow me to demonstrate my directing and cinematographic abilities all at once."

Despite warnings from his peers, Holben went ahead with the production before seeking approval from King himself. Luckily, when he finally contacted the famous author about the project, King agreed to sell the non-commercial rights for a dollar, a practice that the master of horror has generously exercised throughout his career. Holben's chance paid off. During pre-production, inquiries about the film started streaming in from King fans around the world, leaving Holben bewildered.

"I still haven't discovered how they found out about the project," he said. But they did, and the King machine began to effortlessly work in his favour.

Shortly afterwards, *Total Movie Magazine* offered to distribute 500,000 DVD copies of his film and Holben launched a high-traffic internet site with ongoing updates on the progress of his film. Though *Total Movie* subsequently went belly-up, Holben is still riding on the King wave and will no doubt have a huge audience for the internet release.

Holben admits that he was fully aware of the perks in producing a King piece, but, he added, "at the same time, there is a lot to live up to being associated with the Stephen King franchise - there's a great deal of pressure to deliver something that will wow an audience."

The film is directly based on the poem which details the paranoid musings of a person gone mad, played by Tonya Ivey. Hol-



Tonya Ivey plays a disturbed woman in *Stephen King's Paranoid*

ben decided to place a female in the role to "throw people off balance."

"Like most people who read the poem, I initially thought it was a man," he said.

Paranoid, the film, only includes one line of dialogue, drawing the action from a narration of the poem. Black and white sequences represent the mad woman's delusions and the colour bits represent reality. Though much of King's writing fits neatly into the horror category, Holben says *Paranoid* is an exception.

"*Stephen King's Paranoid* is not that type of film," he said. "It's much more of a character study in private torment than a horror film."

You'll soon be able to judge for yourself. Look for background and updates on the release at www.paranoidthemovie.com.

-Mary-Beth Hollyer

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Fantasporto 2001: A blood letter from Portugal

Every filmmaker dreams of the chance to show his work to an audience – it's part of the rush of making the movie in the first place. On February 22, I took off to Porto, situated on the banks of the Douro River in northern Portugal for the *Fantasporto Film Festival* with my wife, actress/filmmaker Leslie Ann Coles. This genre-specific event has been going strong for over twenty years and played host to such Canadian guests as David Cronenberg, Vincenzo Natali and now, us. As best as I can remember, the following events are all true.

FEBRUARY 23

Arrive in Porto at the Hotel Infante de Sagres, a five-star hotel with baroque wood everywhere, and pass out for an hour. Head down to the Festival around the corner at the Tivoli Cinema. We're greeted at the door with a big *RoboCop*-style ad for the beer company, Super Bock, for their own character "Robocopo" – he's got a beer in one hand and a bucket head and I decide not to mention it to the lawyers. Grab our schedules and are amazed at the wealth of movies from around the world: all bizarre, most unknown. And all four of our *RoboCop* movies prominently displayed since they are opening and closing the festival. We show the first two *RoboCop* movies to great acclaim. Exhausted by the end of it. Meet Julian Temple (*Filth & The Fury*), Chuck Perello (*Ed Gein*) and Frank Novack (*Good Housekeeping*).

FEBRUARY 24

Rush off to screening of *Divided Into Zero* and *Subconscious Cruelty* by Montrealeers Mitch Davis and Karim Hussain. They are insane and their work is destined to be banned worldwide. Mitch tells me he is very happy about that.

FEBRUARY 25

Sleep in until lunchtime. We shop and marvel at the sights and sounds before I decide to introduce Leslie to Jess Franco films. She watches part of *Dracula* with me

and runs away. I don't blame her. See Julian Temple again. He's unhappy that nobody is making a fuss over him. We run away. See *The Irrefutable Truth About Demons*, a cool horror/fantasy hybrid from New Zealand starring Karl Urban from *Price of Milk*.

FEBRUARY 26

Meet loads of other filmmakers and make nice with festival organizers from around the world. Race to *The Isle*, a love story with fish hooks from Korea. Later, more Franco with *Sadistrotica*. My sides ache. Left *The Convent*, a tongue-in-cheek nun killing B-movie that was just soooooo not interesting. See Julian Temple. Run the other way.

FEBRUARY 27

"Deeper. Deeper. Deeper." This is the *The Audition*'s catch phrase, a Japanese horror film with a grueling last ten minutes which managed to clear the isles in Cannes. See this film if you care; all will be explained. Continue our Jess Franco cinema binge with *The Bloody Judge*. Have to leave. It's too good for Jess (we want trash, dammit!). Hear from festival organizer Mario Dominisky that Julian Temple doesn't like me. I'm very upset and cry myself to sleep.

FEBRUARY 28

Have to choose between *Ricky 6*, a flick about teen Satanists shot in Vancouver and Asia Argento's *Scarlet Diva*. Bail from *Ricky* after twenty minutes (you'll know why) and find a gem of a car crash in Asia's *Divu*. It's one of those artist's-tortured-by-life-journal-exposed-dramedies that we love in North America and the Europeans hate. It's universally panned by everyone at the Festival and by the jury, but we love it. More Franco with his beserk *Virgin Among the Living Dead* (was this ever a hardcore film?) and catch Brian Yuzna's *Faust* (which is soooo not good). Then we stagger back to our hotel.

MARCH 1

Chuck Perello's *Ed Gein* is a very cool docu-drama about the man who started it all



Ed Gein moody and suprisingly funny

(if you don't know who he is, you're reading the wrong magazine). Very moody and surprisingly funny. Steve Railsback has never been so good.

MARCH 2

Meet Elias Merhige (*Shadow of the Vampire*) and we chat about LA, film and being careful. Common themes for us all. *Shadow* plays to packed house at 1:00 a.m. and film is every bit as good as the critics say.

MARCH 3

Last day! Am awarded a big old brass statue for my work by the Festival and am shocked, honoured and dismayed. Critical acceptance is something I am not used to. Screen the last *Robo* to full house and much applause and stay up all night at the Vampire Ball featuring a decrepit baroque pomo palace turned disco, chainsaw wielding dancers and hundreds of fans and filmmakers staying up for the early flight to Paris (4:30 a.m.).

MARCH 4

Four hour stopover in Paris and hallucinate all the way home. Will return to *Fantasporto* next year with some of my early films and wife's short, *In the Refrigerator*. Must sleep.

—Julian Grant

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www.museummorphous.com

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www.13thstreet.com

The web arm of a highly successful overseas cable franchise, literature editor Thomas Roche aptly describes 13thstreet.com as the Sci Fi Channel's "more damaged cousin".

www.toxiccartoons.com

A whiff of the demented mind of cartoonist Eric Pigors, including fanbarb jokes galore.

www.mypetskeleton.com

Ghastly music and spell-binding design accent the ethereal beauty of Vincent Marcone's brilliant artwork, on sale here, Vincent is one of the weird web's true dark geniuses, so don't pass his grave/site up.

www.deathrock.com/main.html

This is the place to get your deathrock fix. Contains "all the dirt any deathrocker can shovel."

www.dept13.com

A short list of Department 13 film productions and where to buy movies like *Realm of the Bizarre*.

www.reallyscary.com

All the latest news from horrorland, with a few reviews, a glance at new product and what's on TV this week.

www.undertakerslounge.com

A rival of Jeff Altard's "sporadically published" fanzine *Gravedigger's Union*, this site lovingly pays tribute to the best and worst horror films with news, reviews and, best of all, summaries of films from the last twenty years.

—compiled by Mary-Beth Hollyer

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Remembering Richard Laymon

*Editor's Note: Author Richard Laymon died suddenly on February 14th of a massive heart attack at his home in Los Angeles. At the time of his death, he was the president of the Horror Writers Association of America. He was also the author of some of the most chilling novels of horror and dark suspense of the last twenty years. Among his international base of readers, Laymon's biggest supporters included Dean Koontz and Stephen King. His first novel, *The Cellar*, published in 1980, is still in print and widely regarded as a seminal work in the field of psychological terror. In 1994, he published the memoir *A Writer's Tale* which may be the most intimate and brutally honest look at the life of a contemporary genre writer ever written. Ironically, while Laymon is a bestselling author in such countries as England and Australia, in his native country many of his best novels remain as yet unpublished. As fate would have it, only recently did he acquire both a hardcover and a paperback publisher in the United States to begin to rectify this situation. Further information about his work may be found at his official web site *Richard Laymon Kills!* (www.rlk.cjb.net) Here his friend and colleague Stanley Winter offers some of his memories of the man.*

Not that I am anybody...but when I was given the opportunity in 1989 to edit *Night Visions 7*, and to have my pick of any three writers who had not yet appeared in that prestigious series, the first writer I asked was Richard Laymon. He was kind enough to say yes. (Among his wonderfully dark contributions to my first anthology was the subtle shocker *Madman Stan*. But for the rather personal origins of that tale you'll have to read the afterword I've just penned for his forthcoming collection, *Madman Stan and Other Tales*.)

In 1990, when I asked if I could include him in my first collection of exclusive interviews, *Dark Dreamers: Conversations With the Masters of Horror*, Laymon without hesitation said yes. In 1993, when I had a chance to edit my second anthology of original tales, *After the Darkness*, the first writer I asked for a contribution was Richard Laymon. He of course said yes.

When photographer Beth Gwinn and I were making the crucial choices of the one hundred people we believe to be the most important or influential in the industry, and whom we needed to photograph exclusively for *Dark Dreamers: Facing the Masters of Fear*—wouldn't you know that Laymon was surprisingly willing to be in that collectible book. And when Beth had to twist his arm so that—just for once—he would smile sweetly please in his photograph, somehow she also got the man to go along and say okay.

Jump forward several years—and several more great interviews—to last summer when I was told by producer-director Stephen Maynard to start selecting the people I wanted on our (then) forthcoming television show, *Dark Dreamers*. You guessed it. On the opening day of the World Horror Convention 2000, the first internationally acclaimed author I approached to be a guest for the Canadian produced interview show was the ever smiling... Richard Laymon.

And naturally by now all he damn well could say was yes!

We eventually shot that episode at the Laymon home on December 2, 2000. (Dick even said yes when I asked if I could go in to his personal collection and take an unread, first edition copy of every one of his books. His wife Ann filled the boxes and his daughter Kelly helped carry the boxes to the van. I explained that I needed the books just to show their covers during the course of the interview. Don't tell me you wouldn't have done the same.) That episode featuring Laymon as the first half of the show was then broadcast in January across most of Canada and the northernmost points of the United States.

And should we eventually get to meet in some bar on the Other Side, you know whom the first person will be that I'll politely ask if they'll buy me a drink.

So thanks in advance for the gin and tonic, Dick.

Thanks until then for everything else—the stories, the interviews, the advice, the encouragement... and your unselfish help over the years in making me... a somebody. Even if it was just as *Madman Stan*!

—Stanley Winter



Richard Laymon and Stanley Winter.

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Dreadlines.

Horror/Kung-fu turns eight

Viewers of late-mite cable television in and around the Los Angeles area are celebrating eight years of *Horror/Kung-Fu Theatre*, an original show that carries on the tradition of such horror TV luminaries as Seymour, Mo'Nia Lisa and Elvira. Broadcast in thirty cities in Los Angeles county, the show features a mishmash of B-movie excerpts, local performers, bizarre guests and a disguised host who calls himself the Nightshadow.

A pro-wrestler with five championship titles under his belt, Nightshadow is a self-described Wolf-Pyre (part werewolf, part vampire). He made his television breakthrough eight years ago when he slapped around another host while being interviewed on cable television.

"They had many calls from viewers who wanted to come down to the studio and do me bodily damage, kinda like in the old *Frankenstein* movies when the mob was coming with toothes and pitchforks!" the charismatic host told *Rue Morgue*. "The production manager called me a couple of days later and asked me to do my own show."

Initially, LA's Channel 6 had wanted a

wrestling show, but Nightshadow managed to pitch them an idea of a horror/kung-fu themed variety show with a local slant. Since its premiere in April 1993, the show has been home to regular guests Dr. Sigmund Freud (a psychologist with Tourette's syndrome), Howard Stern's Beetlejuice, Reggie (Phantom) Bannister and Felix Silla (the original Cousin Itt from the *Addams Family*), as well as many personalities from the fringes of the independent horror community, or simply from the fringes.

"I search for the strangest people in L.A. (you don't have to go to far!) and get them on the show," reveals Nightshadow. "I look for them at Venice Beach, Santa Monica promenade and the world famous Doo-Dah parade. I also have many strange friends."

Unrivaled in its spontaneity and low-budget charm, *Horror/Kung-Fu Theatre* has been, at one time or another, a showcase for local youngsters spinning their batons or an



Horror/Kung-Fu's Nightshadow with fans

interview with Forrest J. Ackerman. Ironically, one thing that it seldom gives air time to is wrestling.

"I have not wrestled on the show, except for some squabbles here and there, which were always started by the other guests," says Nightshadow.

Horror/Kung-Fu Theatre is carried by Adelphi Cable, AT&T Broadband (airing 1:00 a.m. on Saturdays) and Buenavision Cable (airing at midnight on Fridays) and there are plans in the works "to expand and corrupt more areas" in the near future.

-Mary-Beth Hollyer

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What's Brooding...

with *Vulvaria Wick*

STARBUCKS KILLS A little bat recently told *Rue Morgue* that the script for *Halloween 8: Michael Myers.com* is, surprise, "bloody horrid". This same bat, who has read the script in its entirety, also gave us a plot synopsis of the impending bomb now in the early stages of production. Jamie Lee Curtis makes her obligatory appearance in the opening scene as a resident of a mental institution and is finally killed off by her brother. Thought Mikey was decapitated in *Halloween: H20*? Nope, it wasn't him, it was the cop in full-Myers costume...! The action turns to LL Cool J (*H20*), a computer geek who is setting up a live internet broadcast from Myers' house. A bunch of college kids are invited to take on the ultimate challenge—spend an evening in the house and win free tuition! Doggone it, Michael shows up and ruins all the fun. In what might be the slimiest product endorsement ever, Myers is finally electrocuted (drum roll please) BY A STARBUCKS MOCHACHINO! Yes, it's all true, and you heard it here first! Our source also told *Rue Morgue* that the director's chair has not yet been filled. Though the rumour was that Rick Rosenthal (*Halloween 2*) recently replaced Whitney Ransick as director, Rosenthal apparently isn't too keen on getting involved in the film. Wonder why?

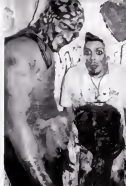
AMERICAN STUPID Lucifer help us, Lions Gate Productions is bringing back *American Psycho* for a second round. *American Psycho II* is currently in the early production stages with Morgan J. Freeman (*Hurricane Streets*) set to direct and Mila Kunis (*That 70s Show*) as the star attraction. Kunis will play a college freshman who survived psycho yuppie Patrick Bateman's original killing spree. After developing a "dark obsession" to join a professor as his teaching assistant, she sets out to destroy anyone who gets in her way. No word yet on video or theatrical release on this one, though it's slated for 2002.

ZOMBIE TROUBLES Unless you live in the Arctic, you probably have heard that Universal returned distribution rights for *House of 1,000 Corpses* to Rob Zombie in March. Universal was a bit miffed by the violent film and felt that the MPAA could not possibly give it less than an NC-17 rating, which doesn't quite fit in with their mandate. Zombie says that in the meantime he hopes to edit the film down to an R-rating. Says Troma Entertainment President Lloyd Kaufman to Rob Zombie: "Don't permit the scumbags from Universal to disembowel your movie." Troma is interested in distributing the movie uncut "the way your genius intended it," though, as yet, the two horror moguls have not talked.

SPEAKING OF GENIUS Troma Entertainment's *Citizen Toxic*, the highly anticipated fourth sequel to *The Toxic Avenger*, will premiere at Cannes in May. The film stars Ron Jeremy, Hank the Angry Drunken Dwarf, Lemmy from Motorhead, Corey Feldman, Debbie Rochon and Kaufman's usual ensemble of Tromatic actors. Uncle Lloydie has once again outdone himself—*Citizen* opens with a good old-fashioned school shooting. We're hoping Universal picks it up. The company will also host the Tromadance film festival party at

Cannes to honour filmmakers whose movies were shown at Tromadance in Park City, Utah.

KING SEQUELS ABOUND A slew of movies somewhat loosely based on Stephen King's work are currently in various stages of production. In addition to *Firestarter 2* and *Children of the Corn 7*, plans are in the works for a second sequel to *The Shining* (*Redrum*, *The Shining II*) as well as *The Mangler*. King himself has again started working on his "bad luck book", *From a Bad Luck Book*, which he has neglected since his accident in 1999. The book should roll off the presses, barring any further bad luck, this time next year.



Toxie Rules! New from Troma Ent., who else?

TWO GEEZERS AND A MUMMY The film adaptation of Joe Lansdale's *Bubba Ho-Tep* is scheduled to begin shooting as you read this. Directed by Don (Phantasm) Coscarelli and starring Bruce Campbell and Ossie Davis, the horror/comedy takes up the theme of (almost) living people vs. evil mummy. A while back, Campbell described his film on his official web site thusly: "I play a geriatric old geezer, a 70-year-old in a rest home who thinks he's Elvis. I team up with another old geezer at the home, Ossie Davis, who thinks he's JFK, and together we set out to defeat the evil mummy, Bubba Ho-Tep." ☿

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THE GORE/MET



Buried Alive (Bujo omega)

Starring Kieran Center, Cinzia Monreale, Franca Stoppi; **directed by** Joe D'Amato; **written by** Ottavio Fabri and Giacomo Guerrini

Francesco (Center), despondent over the untimely demise of his fiancée, puts his amateur taxidermy skills to the test and stuffs the fresh remains of his dearly departed. Storing his handiwork in his bed, he fawns lovingly over the beautiful corpse as he works through his grief. Alone but for the presence of his devoted housemaid (Stoppi), he seeks new love in the arms of lovely young women, bringing them to his mansion for gentle lovemaking and brutal murder. Brutal murder? Yes, for Francesco is in need of anger management classes. Iris, his loyal and love-struck servant, duti-

fully aids in the disposal of his victims, whether by preparing an acid bath to melt the bones or stewing and consuming a pot of tender human flesh. While she willingly services Francesco's sexual desires, she is no closer to capturing his heart as she was when she used voodoo to kill his beloved. Meanwhile, a private detective, hired to investigate one of the disappearances, gets ever closer to Francesco's dark secret.

Joe D'Amato's disturbing masterpiece is one of the sickest films ever made, a quietly perverse classic that remains ignored as seemingly every other European auteur of

Ah, the corpse conundrum: victim disposal has been a problem for murderers ever since Cain slew Abel. Burial, dismemberment, immolation and even cannibalism have been well explored in both fact and fiction, and in this issue we look back at a couple of the more inventive films out of Europe to focus on this dilemma.



note gets a line of remastered Collector's Editions. Sporting an insane plot, disgusting gore FX and a fantastic score by the legendary Goblin, this infamous shocker is available through a long out-of-print VHS release from the defunct Thriller Video or through the grey market.

Cannibal Man Starring Vicente Parra, Emma Cohen, Eusebio Poncele; written and directed by Eloy de la Iglesia. Anchor Bay Entertainment.

Marcos (Parra) works on the disassembly line of a factory slaughterhouse, vowing to scale the company ladder and establish himself so he can marry his upper-middle-class girlfriend Paula. After

of the house he shares with his brother Steve, Steve, a long haul trucker, returns early from a road trip and an emotional Marcos confesses his crimes. When Steve threatens to go to the police Marcos caves his skull in with an adjustable wrench, hiding the body in his bedroom. Then Steve's fiancée comes looking for her husband to be, only to become part of the increasingly gruesome tableau forming in Marcos' bedroom. Thus is Marcos' slow descent into madness chronicled, as the mounting pile of corpses and rising stench force him into even more creative ways of concealing his crimes. Nestor, a soft-spoken, effeminate young man, watches through binoculars from the balcony of his family's lavish apartment in a neighbouring building. He strikes up a relationship with Marcos in the

hopes that they can "become better friends", and eventually becomes Marcos' moral compass, gently guiding him to the film's downbeat dénouement.

Cannibal Man (*La semana del asesino*) is more than simple exploitation, it is a story of unrequited love. The gay subtext, coupled with much homoerotic imagery and graphic footage of animal butchery, doomed this film to obscurity. Vacillating between black comedy and serious drama, *Cannibal Man* is a compelling gem that deserves the attention of the discerning Eurohorror buff. Anchor Bay presents a bare bones DVD in the original 1.85:1 aspect ratio, and includes animated menus and a theatrical trailer. While the English language title is a bit of a misnomer, the plot point it is derived from is much too salacious to be revealed here. **B**



a date the pair get overly amorous in the back of a cab, missing the indignation of the driver. In an ensuing fistfight, Marcos brains the driver with a rock and the two lovers flee the scene. Wracked by guilt, Paula threatens to go to the police and throw herself on their mercies. Ashamed of his lowly social status, Marcos strangles Paula and stashes her body in the bedroom

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HERR BUTCHER M.D.

Anatomy

Starring Franka Potente, Benno Fürmann and Anna Loos
Written and directed by Stefan Ruzowitzky
Columbia Pictures

"Corpses look the same at night as during the day," otherwise brilliant medical student Paula Henning (Potente) tries to reassure herself as she descends into the howls of her medical school's morgue to examine the corpse of a mysteriously deceased acquaintance. But this provocative German import is a horror film after all, so reason must take a backseat to thrills.

Potente made a name for herself in the foreign hit *Ran Lola Ran* and gets her chance at stardom this fall playing opposite Matt Damon in the big-screen adaptation of recently-deceased author Robert Ludlum's spy thriller *The Bourne Identity*. As *Anatomy*'s ascetic Paula, she wins a place at the prestigious Heidelberg Academy studying anatomy. But her dedication to science is shaken by both her feelings for fellow student Caspar (Sebastian Blomberg) and, more ominously, by her discovery of a secret society of doctors and students who experiment upon still-living patients.

It is this horrific conceit which leads to not

only some genuinely disturbing images (a partially dissected patient awakens in the middle of his own autopsy) but to some equally unsettling dialogue on the nature of the doctor-patient relationship and the value of human life. Yes, the spectre of Joseph Mengele hangs heavy over *Anatomy*, but the leader of the cabal dismisses these past outrages as "the embarrassing slips made by a few Nazi doctors." His point, that the public wants cures for disease at any cost, is true at the same time as it is unconscionable. Don't look for philosophical debates like these in *Urban Legend*.

If *Anatomy*'s dénouement relies too heavily on Hollywood horror movie cliché — our screaming heroine finds inner reserves of strength to defeat the pursuing bad guy — its uniquely Teutonic gallows humour maintains our interest to the bloody end.

-SeanPlummer

SQUEEZE ME

Python DVD

Starring Jenny McCarthy, Wil Wheaton and Frayne Rosenoff
Directed by Richard Claiborne
Written by Chris Neal, Paul J.M. Bogh and Gary Hershberger
20th Century Fox Home Entertainment

The opening scene of *Python* has two lesbians spending a hot 'n' heavy night of action in a tent. An argument ensues over one of the girls' commitment to the other team, right before a giant 60-foot python devours the two. If this isn't one for the guys, tell me what is. Yet despite that obvious appeal for the likes of someone like myself, plus a lot of decent humour, *Python*

is a film that has remained in my head as an incredibly annoying experience, not unlike the lingering scent of burnt popcorn.

Somewhere in small-town America the aforementioned python has been accidentally unleashed following a plane crash with the titular creature aboard. Yes, the creature is the result of a top secret government experiment (with Robert Englund displaying his inability to act as the evil scientist), and yes, Special Forces have been called in to deal with the problem. Casper Van Dien has a minor role as leader of the Forces, not that things would be significantly improved had he a major part. But that's just the background. This film is actually about two guys fighting over past girlfriends, eventually coming together to

deal with the pesky reptile problem. Oh, and Wil Wheaton is a purple-haired real estate agent who eventually becomes snake food. And he still looks twelve years old. Surprisingly, there is a lot to like about *Python*. The snake effects are at least decent, and some of the kill scenes are satisfyingly sick, like Jenny McCarthy getting decapitated by a tail lash (naturally she gets top billing for her cameo.) Plus, the inside jokes are remarkably witty, with top prize going to the "do you think it will find us? Of course, we didn't even close the door!" joke. Still, fluff can only go so far, and when a sixty-foot python is sneaking up on girls in the shower, it does become a little much. I mean, how the hell did this snake "sneak" into the house? Are you telling me no one saw a sixty foot reptile crawling up the street first thing in the morning?

Then again, you have to give it to the guys at 20th Century Fox, who recommend this film to those who "enjoyed movies like *Lake Placid* and *Anconda*." I guess we can't argue with that logic.

-Aaron Lupton



Anatomy: A provocative mix of disturbing images and gallows humour



The Crimson Rivers: A slick, stylish and genuinely entertaining horror/adventure.

BLOOD ON THE ALPS

The Crimson Rivers

Starring Jean Reno, Vincent Cassel and Nodia Fares
Directed by Mathieu Kassovitz
Written by Jean-Christophe Grange based on his book *Les Rivières Pourpres*
Alliance Atlantis

The Crimson Rivers begins with a long, loving, wandering pan over the surface of a mutilated corpse, zooming in on discolorations, open wounds and maggots. Very Seven. Out of their depth with this bizarre cult murder, the local police request a task force from Paris. Enter Jean Reno, a compelling presence as Commissaire Neumann, with the line, "I am the task force." How Clint Eastwood.

Vincent Cassel plays a pot-smoking bad boy cop, sort of a white Eddie Murphy. With his two buffoonish, unformed sidekicks, he visits a local skinhead club searching for the vandals who spray-painted swastikas on a little girl's grave. Enter the dragon in the form of a really fun martial arts battle that seems like a scene from a different movie altogether.

The Crimson Rivers is an odd little film alright; the plot involves *Boys of Brazil* neo-fascist genetic manipulation and the setting in the French Alps reminded me of *Snikku's Sense of Snow*. I don't feel guilty about giving away a twist ending that involves an evil twin, mainly because it's one of those "where'd that come from?" endings that audiences should be warned about. And not incidentally, it's one of the lamest endings I can remember in a major motion picture.

Still, *The Crimson Rivers* deserves to be called a major motion picture, because when it's working—which is most of the time—it is as slick, stylish and genuinely entertaining a confection as Hollywood ever puts out in the horror/adventure genre. A healthy heaping of gore, thunder and lightning and a

hooded killer add significantly to the suspense.

But be warned; the ending is pretty bad and, oh, there's also the fact that this film is French with subtitles. If you're at least semi-literate and looking for a good time, you could do a hell of a lot worse than *The Crimson Rivers*.

—Dale Sproule

SLASH ME NOT!

Nutbag
Starring Mack Hail, Renee Sloan, and Heinrich the Tarantula
Written and directed by Nick Palumbo
Stage Films

Nutbag, subtitled *10 Days In The Life Of A Serial Killer*, is exactly that. Essentially plotless, without a cogent beginning or conclusion, this film focuses on the internal conflicts and outward acts of the nameless Nutbag, chillingly portrayed by Mack Hail. Our chain-smoking psychopath, given to voice-overs and long soliloquies to his pet-tarantula Heinrich, literally cuts a swath through a bevy of lovely young Las Vegas women while contemplating his existence, his motivations, and suicide. Hail is rage personified in this role, all brooding intensity and exploding anger. Women are nothing but whores to him, relationships impossible. Seeing possible redemption after a chance encounter with Mandy, new in town, the Nutbag sublimates his murderous impulses and attempts to connect with her. Mandy's apparent rejection of the Nutbag's advances merely reinforces his grim view of women and further fuels his sociopathic tendencies.

A visually interesting and compelling film, *Nutbag* is kindred to William Lustig's *Maniac* and John McNaughton's *Henry, Portrait of a Serial Killer*. As with these two films, police procedural scenes are eschewed to concentrate on the internal torment of the serial killer. That's not to say that *Nutbag* steals elements from these films, rather, it adds to the vocabulary of this particular subgenre, standing on its own due in no small part to an oddly sympathetic turn by Hail. Unlike Joe Spinnell's gibbering Maniac, the Nutbag is grounded in reality and is capable of cold self-examination. While more than a little disturbing, *Nutbag* is not particularly graphic in terms of gore, but it is in terms of full frontal nudity. The Nutbag is not driven by lust, however, but by hatred, and the murders he perpetrates are asexual.

Shot on digital video, the image quality is first-rate, complemented by an effective original score by Eric Galligan, which is also available on CD. Director Palumbo is promoting this as a slasher, but this is no teen-friendly film, and is much more than some campus cut-up. Available online from www.frightflux.com.

—The G-m-mot



ENOS MUST DIE

Death Mask DVD

Starring James Best and Linnee Quigley
Directed by Steve Latshaw
Written by James Best
MTI Home Video

If you're anything like me, I'm sure the first thought that runs through your mind when you wake up every morning is "What ever happened to James Best, the guy who used to play Sheriff Rosco P. Coltrane on *The Dukes of Hazard*?" Well, ponder no more, faithful RM junkie, for we have all the answers. Seems ol' Jimmy picked up stakes and moved to Florida some years back, no doubt to retire on the residual money pouring in now that them Duke boys are on constant rotation on the Redneck Racin' & Rassin' Station (oh, sorry, that's "The Nashville Network"). In his spare time he's writing, producing and starring in movies like *Death Mask*.

(continued on page 38)

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MEZCO



(continued from pg. 35)

The EC comics-ish story focuses on Wilbur (Best), a withdrawn carnival mask maker with a gruesome facial scar. He spends most of his time alone, his only real companionship coming from Angel (Quigley, first introduced - big surprise - taking a shower), a sideshow stripper and girlfriend of the carnies' sleazy owner Guido (John Nuten).

Driven by a series of humiliations to visit a swamp-dwelling witch, Wilbur is granted the power to create a lasting work of art in an elaborate wooden mask. But he soon discovers that if he gazes upon anyone while wearing it, swift and violent death soon comes to them. Vengeful mayhem ensues.

Best and Quigley elicit sympathy with their portrayals of basi-

cally good people doomed to eke out a living at the ass end of existence. Indeed, the whole film has a sort of trailer trash charm (which means that there's bootloads of gratuitous nudity to go with the "aw shucks I'm a murderer" shenanigans) that compensates for its obvious low budget. Use is even made of primitive but effective computer animation to create the mask's transformations (note to Hollywood: when even threadbare made-in-Florida pictures have CGI, it's time to stop using it as a selling point).

For such a backyard production, the DVD is packed - trailers, deleted scenes, and a fairly informative (if self-serving) making-of documentary that actually went some distance in convincing this reviewer to revise his initial misgivings about the film. While no classic, it's a decent attempt that barks back to the days of H.G. Lewis, and recognizing the effort that went into it helps one appreciate it all the more.

-Joseph O'Brien

LIFE'S RICH PARODY

Shriek If You Know What I Did

Last Friday the 13th

Starring Majandra Delfino, Harley Cross,

Tiffani-Amber Thiessen and Tom Arnold

Directed by John Blanchard

Written by Sue Bailey and Joe Neims

Lions Gate Films

Guess it was bound to happen - the Great Millennial Shitty Teen Horror Film Plague was destined to spawn at least a couple of *Airplane!*-style parodies. Problem is, the Wayans Brothers' just-sorta-okay *Scary Movie* got the high profile theatrical release months before the vastly superior *Shriek If You Know What I Did* *Last Friday the 13th* went straight to vid.

I can recall a lot of reviews of *Scary Movie* (including one by our Joe "my kingdom for a fart joke" O'Brien) complaining that since



SLAYERRIFIC!

Buffy the Vampire Slayer - The Slayer Chronicles

Starring Sarah Michelle Geller, Nicholas Brendon, and

Alyson Hannigan

Written and directed by various

20th Century Fox Home Entertainment

Okay, so *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* does not address the same philosophical examinations as

Serling's *Twilight Zone*, but as far as horror-as-coming-of-age goes, the show has few competitors. Really, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is what all those new teen slashers should be. What is truly impressive about it is its ability to introduce new characters, expand upon those already established, and introduce countless plot developments without becoming overwrought with inconsistencies or opting for self-parody.

A prime example of such a development took place in 1999's season three with the introduction of the sexy slayer Faith, the girl you love to hate. Faith loved her job for reasons apart from helping others, and eventually came to symbolize a sort of anti-Buffy. Faith's presence became known as "The Slayer Chronicles", and what followed was an ingenious and entertaining way to showcase Buffy's changing emotions and a confrontation with her darker side.

Volume One of *The Slayer Chronicles* features the episodes *Bad Girls* and *Consequences*, which originally aired on February 9 and 16, 1999, respectively. *Bad Girls*

sees the bond between Faith and Buffy strengthening in response to the arrival of a new Watcher, the overbearing Wesley Wyndam-Pryce. Pryce seems more like an ill attempt at creating a comic-relief guy, but regardless, it's fun to see Buffy go *Heathers*-style and act out of her traditional goody-goody character. This episode is also noteworthy for featuring a *Black* monster knock-off in the demon Balthazar. Consequences is supposed to portray the aftermath of the accidental death of the mayor at the hands of Faith, but stands as one of the weaker installments in the series for not actually depicting any consequences whatsoever for either Faith or Buffy.

Enemies and Earshot, which make up Volume 2, has Faith leaving Buffy and joining the darkside for good, turning her back on any notion that with power comes responsibility. Again, the second episode on this tape is the weaker. The "controversial" episode is famous for bearing a too-distinct resemblance to the Columbine shootings, and therefore had to be shelved out of sight and bad publicity. As a result, Earshot does not really fit in with the plot of the *Slayer Chronicles* at all, and probably only appears here for its notoriety. The ending resembled too closely one of those *Family Tier* kitchen talks.



Earshot: A noxious bit of Buffy lore

If there is one tape worth getting from this box set, it's the two-part Graduation Day, the season finale. Written and directed by series creator Joss Whedon, Graduation Day is a showcase for Whedon's horror metaphors for high school life. Not only does Buffy have to finish her finals, but she also has to put innocence behind her once and for all by killing her now-arch nemesis Faith. Not only is she facing the end of the structured life of a high school student, she also leaves the Council, a governing body for vampire slayers. And in the end she must organize an army to fight the legions of Hell, kill an enormous demon-snake, and save Sunnydale from total destruction, all before being banded her high school diploma. The buried metaphor, of course, is that Buffy finally survives high school

-Aaron Lupton

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Scream itself was a satire, the idea of satirizing it was pretty redundant, and for the most part I'm inclined to agree. But sharp writing and energetic direction can go a long way toward making even the most ill-conceived idea fly; while *Shriek* and *Scream* are for all effects and purposes the same film, *Shriek* outgins its competition at practically every turn. The opening sequence alone (the inevitable riff on Drew Barrymore's death scene from *Scream*) is a gut-buster, and the gags keep coming relentlessly for the next ninety minutes. One reason this film works better than *Scream* is that it doesn't follow *Scream*'s storyline quite so slavishly, referencing numerous other horror films (not to mention *There's Something About Mary*, *Baywatch*, *Grease*, *Chariots of Fire* and a shitload more). In fact, about half the references in *Shriek* are digs at *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, although for my money the gags aren't nearly as vicious as that piece of crap deserves.

Never thought I'd sing the praises of Tom Arnold or 90210's Tiffani-Amber Thiessen, but their performances (in the David Arquette/Courtney Cox roles respectively) are gems of comic timing and deadpan delivery. And then there's Shirley Jones—that's right, Shirley Fuckin' Jones, man!—who makes a scene-stealing, too-brief appearance as the raunchy Nurse Kevorkian.

Can't help but wonder how this one would have fared in theatres, especially with the kind of advertising budget that no doubt helped *Scream* pack 'em in. It's unfortunate, because while *Scream* Movie certainly had its moments, the Wayans Brothers haven't made a really good film since *I'm Gonna Get You Sacka'* all those years ago. So here's hoping *Shriek* racks up the big numbers it deserves in rentals—and yes, Joe, there are fart jokes.

—John W. Bowen

WHEN ANGELS COME A RAPIN'

At Dawn They Sleep
Starring Brian Paulin, Rich George and Tanya Hennessey
Written and directed by Brian Paulin
Video Outlaw



Stephen (Paulin) and Ian (George) are drug dealers battling for control of the local market, exacting cold-blooded revenge on anyone encroaching on their turf. After waging a violent, John Wood-styled gun battle with a rival gang, they embark on a night of partying and rough sex with some willing goth babes. Waking up the next morning with little memory and far more than your average hangover, they mutate into blood-thirsty immortals. After wiping out their rivals in a vicious and protracted gun battle, their true destiny is revealed when the

women reappear and reveal themselves as angels, envious of God's gift of the Earth to Mankind. Seeking to eradicate humanity and claim the planet as their Paradise, the angels have chosen Stephen and Ian to be the instruments of their unholy machinations. A demon lord intercedes and transforms Stephen into a soldier of Hell, to slaughter the angels and maintain the balance of power between Heaven and Hell. Stephen and Ian, now at the forefront of the opposing forces, wage an apocalyptic battle as the fate of world lies in the balance.

At Dawn They Sleep is one of the most unnovative and original ultra-low budget films to come along in a while. Paulin is obviously a dedicated horror fan (as evinced in the requisite horror geek procession of laser discs, video tapes and film posters that frequently appear in the film), delivering the kind of hails-to-the-wall film that is rarely produced these days. Influenced in no small part by the black metal scene, Paulin ladles out nudity, excessive gore, spewed bodily fluids, angels, demons, vampires, cannibalized nuns, burning churches, bebeaded priests and other sundry blasphemies with disgusting regularity. The most striking aspect of this film is the image quality, highlighting some superb effects work and thoughtful cinematography. Also of note is the original incidental music and crushing black/death metal that make up the soundtrack. A roaring freight train of a film aimed straight between the eyes! Keep watching after the credits for a bonus lingerie show by the women who play the angels.

—The Gore-met

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REISSUES

ATMOS-FAIR APLENTY

Dementia 13 DVD

Starring William Campbell, Patrick Magee and Luana Anders

Written and directed by Francis Ford Coppola
The Roan Group

In the "everyone starts somewhere" orbit of the film biz, we have Francis Ford Coppola's directorial debut *Dementia 13*, a fun Corman quickie boasting a flamboyant cast and great locations, lensed entirely in Ireland.

There are strange goings-on at the Haloran Estate. Haunted by the drowning death of youngest sibling Kathleen years before, a bedridden matriarch, her two sons and their fiancées gather on the anniversary of the death. As the mysterious secrets of the little girl's death begin to surface, an unseen killer begins to whittle the already small cast of characters down one by one, courtesy of a nice, sharp axe.

The "people being stalked in an isolated mansion" theme has been a horror staple since the days of *The Old Dark House*, and *Dementia 13* amounts to nothing more than a basic story bolstered by fine performances

and atmosphere. Overall, Coppola shoots economically, while allowing some artfully shot sequences to milk the suspense and elevate *Dementia 13* above the typical genre fare. A few good jolts (especially a now-infamous decapitation scene) are to be

found, and while far from spectacular compared to what would come later from the genre, this film is entertaining enough to warrant your time.

The Roan Group has done a nice job in its DVD presentation of Coppola's humble debut. While far from perfect (owing to the condition of the source materials) one need only look at the theatrical trailer to see what we could have wound up with. Aside from the aforementioned trailer there is an audio commentary by star Campbell, as well as the "D13 Test" - a series of questions which apparently determine whether or not you are mentally prepared to see this motion picture. And contrary to what the *Rue Morgue* staff may think, this reviewer passed with flying colours.

-Brad Abraham



Dementia 13 Francis Ford Coppola's humble directorial debut delivers a few good jolts

FEED YOUR HEAD

Brain Dead DVD

Starring Bill Pullman and Bill Paxton
Directed by Adam Simon
Written by Charles Beaumont and Adam Simon
Concorde New Horizons DVD

Any film with this title is begging for a bad review; fortunately *Brain Dead* (not to be confused with Peter Jackson's kiwi splatterfest a.k.a. *Dead/Alive*) is anything but. Working from a wonderfully twisted (and twist-laden) script by the late, lamented Charles Beaumont (*Twilight Zone*'s *The Howling Man*, amongst many other gems), director Adam Simon (*Carnosaur* and the horror doc *The American Nightmare* - see *RM* #17 and #18, respectively) overcomes an absurdly low budget to deliver a thriller that's a hundred times more clever than it has any right to be. (Today's trivia bomb: Simon cameoed as "Himself" in Robert Altman's great Hollywood piss-take *The Player*).

Pullman stars as pioneering neurologist Rex Martin. At the urging of old school-chum-turned-corporate-sleaze Jim Reston (a great performance by Paxton), Martin performs surgery on Dr. Halsey (Cort), who's gone full-boar nuzo and, haunted by a bloodstained apparition, killed his family on the eve of completing a vital equation for Reston's shady, weapons-manufacturing conglomerate. Trouble is, though he's cured Halsey, Martin inherits his hallucination (or is it?) and starts moving down much the same path that led to Halsey's murderous rampage (or does he?). Much weirdness and man-on-the-verge-of-a-mental-breakdown

identity-confusion shenanigans ensue.

Producer Roger Corman, never one to shy away from making a buck, has repackaged this 1990 release as part of his "Actors' Series" (i.e. "I made this before they were famous"). While it's a welcome addition to the DVD fold, we wish that Corman and Co. had spent some of those bucks on a decent video transfer; the image is atrocious, possibly worse than its VHS release ten years ago, and it's a shame the technical presentation can't match the quality of the content. A solid thriller with a great cast of character actors

(even George Kennedy turns up!), a healthy share of the red stuff and, yes, lots of brains.

-Joseph O'Brien

DYING FOR YOUR ART

Evil Dead Trap DVD

Starring Miyuki Ono, Yuji Horino and Aya Katsuragi
Directed by Toshiharu Ikeda
Written by Takashi Ishi
Synapse Films

You might say that horror's large cult following owes more to the school of visual design than to traditional filmmaking. While this wouldn't be apparent from watching the majority of North America's horror film vault, European contributions almost always rest their bloody laurels on their artistic accomplishments, even if it is at the expense of basic storytelling and character development. Following in this European stylistic tradition is Japan's *Evil Dead Trap* (a.k.a. *Shiryo No Waza*, which actually translates as *Trap of the Dead Ghost*).



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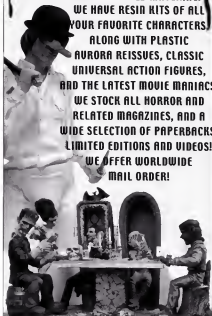
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Originally released in 1988, *Evil Dead Trap* received a lot of attention on the festival circuit a few years ago, and remains one of the more well-known Japanese hard horror offerings. Popularity in its homeland is dubious, however, taking into account

that two of the film's principal cast members – Fumi Katsuragi and Hitomi Kobayashi – are open queers.

The plot of *Evil Dead Trap* is neatly divided into two separate stories. The first half is a traditional horror tale centred around late-night TV host Nami, who one day receives an anonymous video tape depicting the savage torture of someone bearing a disturbing resemblance to herself. Along with her television crew, she tracks down the location where the footage was shot which leads her to a government research facility (actually a US air force base). As they look around, each of the reporters meets with a gruesome end via sadistic death traps that could only have been inspired by Dario Argento. When only Nami is left to survive, the film switches gears completely, with the introduction of a mysterious stranger in search of his brother Hideki.

Although technically superior to standard grindcore, *Evil Dead Trap* is one of those movies that can really only have a cult following. The opening story is minimalist, and the ending is basically nonsensical. What is important, however, is director Ikeda's ambitious visual style. The kill scenes are brutal, but they are done the way a painter strokes his canvas with a brush and the surrealistic ending lingers like a photograph glued to your brain. If you're expecting some Sam Raimi film knock-off, get ready for a big surprise. To paraphrase a fellow Cinemotronic who also resides in these pages: I don't know if I like art films, but *Evil Dead Trap* rocks.

—Aaron Lupton

THE WHITE STUFF

The Stuff DVD

Starring Michael Moriarty, Andrea Marcovicci and Garrett Morris
Written and directed by Larry Cohen
Anchor Bay Entertainment

Larry Cohen is one of the genre's most beloved cult film directors, as his quirky and bizarre take on horror movies is often associated with moving outside the confines of the genre. *Q The Winged Serpent* was one of the most

original creature features, and *It's Alive* was just as deliciously twisted. Also bearing Cohen's stamp of weirdness was 1985's *The Stuff*, a healthy satire on '80s consumerism.

The Stuff in question is a white dessert, similar to yogurt, but closer in resemblance to glue. Its origin is unknown, but its effects are deadly. Well, actually the effect of consuming the stuff is never made totally clear, but suffice it to say that it seems to have a life of its own, and it somehow replaces your innermost self, both physically and mentally. Luckily, industrial spy David (Cohen staple Michael Moriarty) is called in to save the day, and what follows is a hilarious and witty undressing of Corporate America, made all the more entertaining with a cast of over-the-top characters, including Chocolate Chip Charlie (*Saturday Night Live*'s Garrett Morris), and "Real American Hero" Spears (Paul Sorvino).

It should come as no surprise that *The Stuff* functions far better as comedy than outright horror. Cohen attacks multinational corporations (including the statute of litigation which protects Coca Cola's secret ingredient), the public relations industry which "created" the Stuff, and even the army (of which Cohen was once a part) with Sorvino's "don't give me any more of your liberal comments" Colonel Spears.

However, listening to Cohen's audio commentary track on this DVD it's clear he doesn't see or care to remember any of his films' big themes. His comments are peripheral, and he merely relates various incidents which occurred while filming, but never delves into his own motivations. His closest remark as to the substance of the film is that the Stuff actually makes people more benevolent to one another, and that the characters' resistance is reflective of the human race's incompatibility with such a condition. What is interesting however, is Cohen's own commercial plans for the film, an ingenious advertising campaign in which *The Stuff* would be advertised as a real product on TV and in the supermarket.

As a DVD reissue then, *The Stuff* doesn't beg to be owned, with the exception of the obviously superior picture quality. As a film however, *The Stuff* is a clever and somewhat ingenious movie that is strongly recom-

(continued on pg. 48)

CLASSIC FILES EXHUMED

X-Files Season 2 DVD

Starring David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson
Written and directed by various
20th Century Fox DVD

I can't say I've been digging the "new" direction that *X-Files* has been going in (and frankly, I think the show was a done deal after season five), but there it is.

And here this is, Season Two, way back before anyone had an idea where the show was headed. It was, as they say, a special time. A time when *X-Files* was still struggling to get off the ground; when Duchovny, Anderson, Carter and the rest of them were still fighting for survival, before the huge paycheques and blackmailings and the tabloid headlines. 'Twas the season of The Host, Die Hand Die Verletzt, The Calusari, Soft Light and Our Town, a season when the show was still cutting its teeth on ever-increasing forays into horror.

All of it has been collected in this impressive fold-out boxed set which contains all twenty-five episodes in seven DVD discs. As befits the DVD revolution, producers have also crammed in the obligatory outtakes, deleted scenes, third second promo reels and alternative language menus – all pretty minimal in the item's overall appeal. There is a short documentary that's worth the bother, however: it includes interviews with cast, crew and writers and provides a good overview perspective on Season Two. *X-Files* obviously had yet to hit full stride, but there was some great material here; already we see signs of creative risk-taking (the blackly humorous *Humbag*), and important excursions into the *X-Files* mythology (*End Game*). Not to mention that Gillian Anderson was one foxy chick.

—Emma Anderson



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The Whip and the Body DVD
Starring Christopher Lee, Dalilah Levi and Tony Kendall

Directed by John M. Dill (Mario Bava)
Written by Ernesto Gastaldi, Ugo Guerra and Luciano Martino

Blood and Black Lace DVD
Starring Eva Bartok, Camaron Mitchell and Thomas Rainer
Directed by Mario Bava
Written by Mario Bava, Marcello Fondato and Joe Barilla
VCI Home Video

The *Whip and the Body* (La frusta e il corpo) special edition marks the first time a full widescreen uncut European version has been available to the North American market. The controversial 1963 gothic shocker has been around under the insipid American title *What?* with all its naughty bits cut up worse than the son of a Rabbi at a Mohel convention. Christopher Lee stars as sadistic 19th Century nobleman Kurt,

THREE HOT CUPS OF BAVA

who flouts death by returning as a ghostly sado-sexual horn-dog bent on teaching his former lover the forbidden pleasures of pain. A cinematic realization of the 18th century Gothic novel, *Whip and the Body's* fractured take on romance (read overt S&M practices) was deemed too intense for the censors, but fully restored it retains much of what we've come to think of when we think vintage horror.

The chamber music for individual character themes creates an eerie atmosphere akin to the Universal creature features, while expert light-and-shadow framing distract from the actors' melodramatic delivery. Lit any differently, *Whip and the Body* could conceivably be dismissed as a silly horror soap opera. Quite shocking for its time I'm sure, but the modern viewer may find *Whip* a little light on the fright and a bitch to follow at times. However, it offers the viewer a vital exercise in the use of colour, score and imagery as primary functions of horror storytelling.

Blood and Black Lace (*Sei donne per l'assassino*) looks extremely polished by comparison, even with a reputed budget of roughly \$150,000. An important precursor to the eighties slasher and modern day thriller, *B&BL* is often regarded as the first authentic body count movie. Patterned from the giallo, a sadistic Italian feature style adopted by Argento and Fulci later transformed by mainstream Yank directors like Tarantino and Scorsese, *Blood and Black Lace* downplays the psychological focus in favour of a more linear murder mystery scenario.

The setting is Christiana Haute Couture, where the beautiful models are already scarred on the inside, but a diary of terrible secrets leads to the kind of scars that don't heal over time. A symphony of violence brings about six stylized kills at the gloved hand of a mysterious cloaked figure. The *B&BL* special edition DVD presents the uncut, letterboxed version with fully restored main title and murder sequences. All in all, a great opportunity to rediscover two very different threads both quietly sewn into the bloody heart of modern horror cinema.

-Tom Dragoimir

Twitch of the Death Nerve DVD
Starring Claudine Auger, Luigi Pistilli and Claudio Volonte
Directed by Mario Bava
Written by Mario Bava, Joseph McLee and Filippo Ottorini
Imago Entertainment

At long last we have seen the DVD release of the film widely recognized as the precursor to *Friday the 13th* and the resultant legion of stalk 'n' slash cinema that followed. But what separates *Twitch of the Death Nerve* from its bastard offspring is that it's actually a good film (I eagerly await the inevitable onslaught of hate mail for that last statement).

You sure can't go wrong with Mario Bava, and *Twitch of the Death Nerve* (more commonly known by its Stateside title *Bay of Blood*) finds him in fine form. It is interesting how 30 years of slasher films have diluted what was at the time an original premise: a group of people ranging from an elderly woman and her husband to some partying (and typically horny) teens are strangled, decapitated and impaled along a pristine piece of waterfront property. As more bodies pile up, everyone is a target and a suspect, with the resultant revelations adding to the fun. At its most basic, *Twitch of the Death Nerve* is a wickedly subversive film that twists and turns, always unpredictable, with a darkly comic ending that seems to come out of nowhere until you really think about it.

What puts *Twitch* heads (severed, of course) above its subsequent offspring is its stylish direction and clever story. While refraining from spoiling it for the uninitiated, let me just say that the killings have a motive beyond the Jason-Michael school of slaughter. Bava shows a deft hand in handling set piece after bloody set piece, and the film is laced with morbid humour that both alleviates and adds to the already unbearable tension.

We've said before in this magazine that Bava was a master of the genre - now's your chance to see that we have been right all along.

-Brad Abraham



Early slashes from *Blood and Black Lace*

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mended to those who were either too young to remember seeing it, or who just didn't want to watch a film about lethal yogurt the first time around.

-Aaron Lupton

MURDERS IN THAT OTHER MORGUE

The Boneyard DVD

Starring Deborah Rose, Phyllis Diller and Norman Fell

Written and directed by James Cummins
Program Power Entertainment

Here's a novel approach to turning a quick buck: take a good, rather unassuming little horror film that virtually no one saw when it was released a decade ago, and lay on the hype like it's some kind of long-lost cult classic when you re-release it on DVD.

A burnt-out psychic (Rose) reluctantly agrees to help police with a multiple homicide case. She accompanies a detective (Ed Nelson) to the local morgue to view the bodies, locks horns with shrewish, poodle-fancying morgue attendant Diller and discovers that a would-be suicide victim (Denise Young) has actually just been playing possum. Next thing you know, they're all under attack by a bunch of murderous zombies, proving once again that shit does indeed happen.

The lead-up to all this is very slow – the plodding pace and dialogue led me to suspect that writer/director Cummins resorted to padding – but the third reel's worth the wait. Budgetary constraints are evident, but some imaginative zombie make-up effects go a long

way and the monster poodle sequence is a nice touch.

The flavour of *The Boneyard* lies somewhere between the better Full Moon efforts and a slightly less lethal *Return of the Living Dead*; it's not a horror-comedy in the usual sense, but its small-scale, comic book feel benefits from the humorous passages. Diller and Norman (Three's Company) Fell may be the biggest names on the bill, but it's Deborah Rose who turns in the most engaging performance here; Cummins deserves props for having the good sense (and big balls) to cast the matronly, middle-aged Rose instead of one more hot bimbo with more tits than talent.

Among the extras, an interview with Cummins reveals an interesting complication that led to the casting of Fell as a coroner. Seems Alice Cooper had been the first choice, followed by Warren Zevon; Cummins settled on Fell after the rock stars gave him the runaround. And the Phyllis Diller reinforces something I'm sure we've all suspected: that being Phyllis Diller is a full-time gig. To borrow from the poet, don't believe the hype – *The Boneyard* isn't some brilliant gem rescued from obscurity – but don't let that stop you from enjoying a solid little horror flick.

-John W. Bowen

IT'S ONLY STALK'N'SLASH, BUT I LIKE IT

The House On Sorority Row DVD

Starring Kathryn McNeil and Eileen Davidson

Written and directed by Mark Rosman
Elite Entertainment

I've only ever made one New Year's resolution in my life: on December 31, 1999, I swore I would never again feel guilty about a guilty pleasure. Therefore, I don't care if you know that I'm a faithful follower of *Ultimate Fighting Championship*. I drink Jack Daniel's in the tub and play air guitar to *Kiss Alive*, sometimes simultaneously. I even watch *Friends*. Bite me. And yes, I have a weakness for old school slasher films.

The House on Sorority Row (not to be confused with the dismal *Sorority House Massacre* films) isn't necessarily the best of its ilk but it's far from the worst, and if you're a slasher film devotee, that's probably sufficient recommendation. Following graduation, the sweethearts of Sigma Chi or Delta Omega or whatever are hell-bent on throwing one final party, but their stodgey-ass old house mother will have none of it. The girls realize that their only course of action is a Sorority Prank™, which of course Goes Awry™ and the old lady buys the farm and the girls panic and stash the body because, after all, it was only a Sorority Prank Gone Awry™ and this could be a big black mark on their permanent records and then the party guests arrive and people start getting murdered. Yadda, yadda, yadda.

It's not the goriest film of its kind, and director Rosman somehow sees fit to skip on the obligatory Gratuitous Tit Shots™ (only three, one of which looks strangely accidental). However, Rosman shows considerably more technical expertise and visual style than most of his peers; like Russ Meyer, it's like he's trying to show us that he's really much too clever to be working in such a low-brow genre.

The only extra on this DVD is the theatrical trailer, but the film includes rarities like the world's smallest condom and the world's worst band. Besides, Mary-Beth pointed out to me that one of the actresses used to play Ashley or somebody on *The Young and the Restless* or something. Obviously, our MB harbours a few guilty pleasures of her own.

-John W. Bowen



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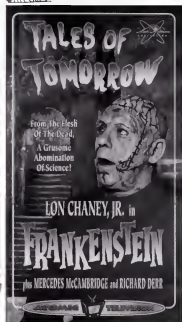
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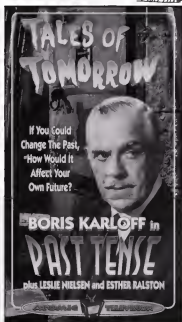
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VINTAGE HORROR REISSUES

JAN IN THE PAN

The Brain That Wouldn't Die 1959

Starring Herb (Jason) Evers, Virginia Leith and Leslie Daniels

Directed by Joe Green

Written by Joe Green & Rex Carlton

Synapse DVD

If you're old enough to remember horror movies as a staple of late-night television, chances are *The Brain That Wouldn't Die* is embedded somewhere deep in your subconscious, no doubt filled under "the one with the girl's severed head on the table and the monster in the closet that rips a guy's arm off." A 3 a.m. perennial that became an Elvira Movie Mosaic staple and, later, the subject of a particularly vicious MST3K roasting, *Brain...* is, like most thermonuclear nostalgia bombs, not nearly as good as you remember it.

An obvious source of inspiration for *Re-Animator* (much of that film's most memorable imagery is drawn from here, and the opening scenes are virtually identical), *Brain...* tells the story of brilliant-but-unethical Dr. Bill Cortner (Evers), whose obsession with perfecting his radical transplant procedures are getting him into hot water at the hospital where he works. En route to a remote mountain villa with his fiancée Jan (Leith), he loses control of his car and crashes. He survives, but poor Jan's decapitated in the wreck. Ever the professional, Bill bundles up her head and makes for his laboratory, where, with the aid of his crippled assistant Kurt (Daniels), he promptly revives her and sets out on a quest to find her a new body.

Despite the lunatic premise, the entire film is played dead straight. The result is by turns unintentionally hilarious, deadily boring and, occasionally – just occasionally – fairly disturbing. The mixed-bag cast are equally earnest; Evers is so stiff he'd probably snap in a high wind, while Daniels behaves like he's performing in a high school play, overemphasizing every line he's given with near Shatner-esque results. Surprisingly, Leith (who vanished into near-obscure after this) acquits herself most admirably, managing to evoke genuine sympathy for her absurd plight and, later, a sense of real menace as she begins communicating with the unseen thing in Bill's closet – the horrific amalgam of his failed transplants.

Synapse's handsome windowboxed transfer nicely preserves the film's bleak and suitably antiseptic feel, and includes a still archive and trailer. More importantly, it retains the sporadic but shocking violence – most notably the aforementioned limb removal – deleted from some video versions (though not the one I remember seeing on TV as a kid, interestingly). The end credits reveal that the original title was *The Head That Wouldn't Die*, which, presumably, some wise distributor thought would make the movie sound too cheesy.

—Joseph O'Brien



Pretty Good Head The mad doctor applies a touch up to fiancée Jan (Leith) in *The Brain That Wouldn't Die*

SECOND BEST OF THE WORST?

Bride of the Monster 1955

Starring Bela Lugosi and Tor Johnson

Written and directed by Ed Wood

Engelwood/Haunted Hollywood

This one appears to have had a slightly bigger budget than Wood's *Plan Nine From Outer Space*, the film which would finally establish him as the worst director ever. It's not quite as howlingly inept as *Plan Nine*, but make no mistake, *Loyal Readers*, it's still very bad. VERY bad. Lugosi – in a booze-and-drug-induced fog, barely a year before his death – plays (gasp!) a mad scientist intent on creating a race of supermen, although he doesn't seem to be having much luck; Johnson, playing against type, is his hulking mute henchman who abducts unwary travellers as experiment fodder. Then they nab reporter Loreta King, which brings her cop boyfriend (Tony McCoy) running, and you can pretty much guess the rest.

If *Plan Nine* remains the ruler by which Wood's hysterically funny failures are measured, *Bride of the Monster* is a good eleven inches. The weird part, however, is that I've actually seen worse movies by better directors.

—John W. Bowen



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Comics
by Gary Butler

More months after the cancellation of DC's underrated but uneven *Flinch*, an indie series surfaces to remind us that horror comic anthologies only work when they get the balance right. *Night Terrors* is possibly the finest balancing act ever seen in this often mismanaged medium; both casual and hardcore fans alike should make a point of seeking it out. The highlight of the debut issue's four EC-style stories is horror master Bernie Wrightson's *Spuds*, a deliciously nauseating look at couch potatoes. But it's all good in *Night Terrors*, because the anthology takes full advantage of the format by offering distinct and different writing and art throughout, resulting in one disturbingly satisfying read. Definitely one to watch for – especially since you won't be sleeping much anymore anyhow.

HULK SMASH! Rarely in Marvel's rich history have two words made so much impact yet carried so little weight. Until now, that is.

Marvel's ass-kicking reboot of its classic universe is being masterfully handled, particularly in Spiderman continuity, where the

Team-Up series fails. *Ultimate Spiderman* writer Brian Michael Bendis is at the helm of this comic as well, which "teams" Spidey and The Hulk only insofar as pairing them in the same package (in other words, they're head-to-head, not side-by-side).

The rampaging Hulk of the early years had both too little vocabulary and too much to say to be either an effective monster or a piteous creature. And he quickly became a comic book cliché. Look back over your shoulder and set the

calendar to '62 – you'll see the barely-out-of-the-gates Hulk running around, talking out loud, and basically making a mockery of himself. "Hulk smash puny humans. Why are puny humans hurting Hulk? What did Hulk do to puny humans? Don't make

Hulk smash puny humans!" Bendis and artist Phil Hester have put the pounding back in The Hulk's pulse. Bendis limits the mindless creature's dialogue to two words only ("HULK SMASH!"), putting aside the pity angle for future development, and making a combo threat/promise out of what was once a warning. Hester's fantastic sense of scale finds The Hulk towering over all corners – indeed, the final panel of the issue finds Hulk's fist wrapped around Spidey's entire head, as Hulk dangles the wall-crawler in the air like a rag doll. (And when he says "HULK SMASH!" for about the tenth time at that point, no one's bored, and everybody's listening.)

The horror behind the concept of The Hulk has always been his blind potential for destruction – and, at its worst, his blind potential for murder. *Ultimate Team-Up* makes the terrible implications of this potential all the stronger by offsetting the situation with vintage Spidey over-his-head-and-loving-it dialogue, including this brilliantly ironic TV reference:

"Don't make me angry – you wouldn't like me when I'm angry." No, we don't like you – we love you. Keep it up, teens.

Possibly the most interesting of all the Spawn storylines is really coming to a head in the current arc of *Spawn: The Dark*



IN THIS ISSUE...

THE NIGHT TERRORS #1

by Wrightson, Monks and others
CHANTING MONKS

ULTIMATE MARVEL TEAM-UP #2

by Bendis and Hester
MARVEL/MARVEL ULTIMATE

SPAWN: THE DARK AGES #23

by Niles and Jones
IMAGE

THE DREAMING #60

by Kiernan and Hoggard
DC/VERTIGO

THE PIPER #3

by Doug Crill and Chadwick St. John
DARK HARVEST

BATMAN: GOTHAM NOIR

by Benjafer and Phillips
DC/ELSEWORLDS

Ages, wherein Covenant (a.k.a. Medieval Spawn) has had his Hell-powers stolen and has failed to grasp the ramifications of allowing this earth-bound energy to remain uncontained. In the previous issue, Covenant mercilessly slaughters the fetal Hellspawn sent to replace him; as issue #23 wraps, Bishop (the Torquemada of this universe) does the same to the Hell-power thief, as one very nasty storm continues to brew. Dark but detailed layouts by Nat Jones make *Spawn: The Dark Ages* a consistent pleasure for layout alone. Steve Niles' humane characterisation of a Spawn slowly coming to grips with his identity and his nature – and his inner turmoil over his propensity for cruelty – makes it a story well worth the read, too.

The gyre widened then suddenly was no more. Following in Neil Gaiman's large and admittedly untraceable footsteps, writer Caitlan Kiernan took an admirable swing at



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keeping Vertigo's Sandman realm of The Dreaming, well, dreamy. Final issue #60 wrapped a storyline more than three years in the telling, and which if slightly overlooked during its proper run, will certainly age well in trade paperback format.

Want to know what the secret was that Cain, keeper of the House of Mystery, told Echo in order to save this particular universe? Hit the Usenet groups now and find out, too late, what you were missing.

Three issues in (and almost as many years — you have to admire these guys for sheer tenacity), indie horror *The Piper* is gaining momentum. After two nomadic issues — in terms of both plot and, frankly, point — the series has finally revealed its raison d'être, and has also started to settle on a solid look. Trapped in a gothic otherworld replete with zombies, living forests and dis-

appearing castles, psycho 'Nam vet Jack faces a task of truly Mysterian proportions — he has to find out why he's there in order to find out how to leave. This one is for fans of flawed gems all the way, and of something a little different.

Gotham Noir isn't the first noir treatment of Batman, and it won't be the last, but it will be remembered as one of the best and blackest. Writer Ed Brubaker casts Jim Gordon as a disbarred cop-turned-P.I., a renegade alcoholic with a chip on his shoulder the size of Gotham. Not surprisingly, Gordon's clean in terms of conscience — he was booted off the force for not taking bribes — but where cigarettes almost killed him in the main DC universe, booze has become his cancerous crutch here. If you want a real look at the terror that can be "the shadow of the bat," check out Batman's midnight visit, which,



Cape Fear Batman returns in one of his blackest outings in DC's *Gotham Noir*.

seen from Gordon's locked-and-very-loaded perspective, finds the vigilante bleeding out of the darkness and seeming to occupy every corner of the P.I.'s office. Brings new meaning to the words "cape fear." **B**



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THE MAN BEHIND THE MONSTER LUGOSI DRIES UP IN LONDON THE MAGICAL LIFE OF VINCENT



Wolf Man's Maker: Memoir of a Hollywood Writer

Curt Siodmak
Scarecrow Press, Inc.

In 1941, Curt Siodmak wrote a script about a werewolf titled *The Wolf Man* and, in doing so, he gave American cinema its third great horror hero after Dracula and Frankenstein. Siodmak's autobiography, *Wolf Man's Maker*, deals little with his werewolf script or its execution on film, but he named his book after the cult classic believing it to be the work that will immortalize him.

His life, which spanned most of the twentieth century, is a testimonial to the wars, the politics and the morals of the age, beginning with his affluent childhood in Germany in 1902, to his penniless arrival in Hollywood and his return to Europe in his golden years. Siodmak recounts his experiences in a business which is at times presided over by incompetence, fear, and dictatorship, from Goebbels' ethno-cleansing of the German film industry to the yes-man mentality of some studio executives whose fear of risk-taking serves to sabotage much of Hollywood's output. But for all of its commentaries and psychoanalysis, Siodmak's story



is most poignant when he writes about his craft and passion – writing, and how its presence in his life saved him many times by giving him a constant goal to work towards.

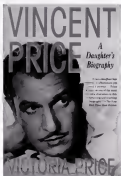
Having finished his book one hour before this year's Oscars, it was disappointing that such an important contributor to the Hollywood horror and science fiction genre was overlooked during the show's recap of last year's dearly departed. Curt Siodmak died in the summer of 2000, leaving behind such classics as *Son of Dracula*, *The House of Frankenstein*, *Donovan's Brain*, *The Beast with Five Fingers*, *I Walked with a Zombie*, *The Return of the Invisible Man*, and of course *The Wolf Man*, to name only a few.

—Nina Mouzitchka

Vampire Over London: Bela Lugosi in Britain

F. Dello Stritto and Andi Brooks
Cult Movies Press

Although many are unaware of it, *Dracula* the play (and later the film) was written by Hamilton Knutsen Deane-Roe, an English actor who also bankrolled his own theatre company. He penned a three-act, 11-player melodrama based on Stoker's novel, which premiered in 1924. A young Bela



Lugosi took over the role in 1927 and it was only afterwards, in February 1931, that he entered film history in Tod Browning's film of the same name. While Lugosi's fame was assured following *Dracula*'s screen debut, critical respect and financial security were not. The unstable progress of his career through the '30s and '40s has been well-documented, as has his rivalry with Karloff (exaggerated, according to Stritto and Brooks), but the authors do a fine job of showing how the constant shifting of public moral sentiment effected the horror film industry.

What had not been chronicled up until now was Lugosi's eight-month tour of Britain in 1951, in a failed final attempt to launch a *Dracula* revival. It's all here – the staging nightmares, the grind of two performances a day and constant travel, Lugosi's opiate addiction (pain killers for "lightning pains") that nearly crippled him in his old age, and the devotion and resilience of his young wife Lillian (who would eventually divorce him).

Stritto and Brooks have also provided us with a detailed description of some of Lugosi's less stellar moments, including *Mother Riley Meets the Vampire* and Ed Wood's *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. Substan-

tial space is devoted to the making of *The Mystery of the Mary Celeste*, perhaps the closest Lugosi got to escaping his mad scientist/monster roles.

In a triumph of modern technology, the co-authors had not met as of the printing of the book. However, the lack of face time doesn't show. The writing style is consistently strong, managing to bring flair to what could have been little more than a listing of regional theatre engagements. As well, the research is exhaustive. Where possible, the authors have interviewed players on the tour, and anecdotes from youthful autograph seekers also help to flesh out Lugosi's personality. From a purely material view, it's a beautifully bound and produced piece.

The book only has two flaws. The first can be fixed in a reprint, namely the copyediting; there seems to be a typographical error on virtually every other page. The second flaw is more systemic, and will likely prevent this book from ever seeing a second printing – audience. Unless you are a massive *Dracula* fan (read: sleep in a coffin and drink blood), I doubt you'll care enough to plough through the entire book; *Vampire Over London* is a well-crafted PhD. thesis, but not really a book for the fans.

—Eric Sparling

**Vincent Price:
A Daughter's Biography**
Victoria Price
St. Martin's Press/Griffin

It's hard not to be a bit suspicious of a biography written by the daughter of the subject. We girls love our daddies and tend to put them on skyscraper-sized pedestals. So I was skeptical when I took on the task of reading this very long book, but, surprisingly, there were very few instances of bias. Though Victoria Price is the quintessential daddy's girl, she keeps a respectable distance from her personal feelings in researching and writing her father's biography. Victoria occasionally gushes, but when she does it seems only natural to gush along with her.

Vincent Price was an amazing man. He was everywhere at once and yet he never spread himself too thin. Few actors can compete with him in terms of the volume of his output and few art historians have had a wider influence on the masses. In the late '60s thru the early '70s, Price made great art affordable for the common man through a very profitable partnership with Sears/Roebuck. Price's art show traveled to a Sears in your town and promised a splendid selection of original works of art – Picassos, Rembrandts, Goyas....

The late star's venture with Sears marked



Bob Burns and Paul Blaisdell with props from *Invasion of the Saucer Men* (1957).

just one of many successful forays into the world of art and was only a small part of his unbelievably full life. He was also a gourmet chef, a best-selling author, a distinguished art collector, a Yale man, an avid socialite, a radio and television personality and, of course, an accomplished film actor.

Though he started out as a dramatic actor, working first in the London theatre and then moving on to Hollywood, Price is renowned for being one of the most prolific contributors to the horror genre, which began with his starring role in *House of Wax* in the 1950s. Like many horror film legends, he would have preferred to get more "serious" roles, but always took whatever was offered to keep the paycheques rolling in. Among his greatest contributions to the genre are *The Fly* and Roger Corman's cycle of Poe films (*The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Pit and the Pendulum*, *The Hallowed Palace*, etc.), which are fully documented here with insiders' stories. In fact, the author provides hilarious personal anecdotes about almost all of Price's films and many of their contributors.

Vincent Price was tireless in researching her father's biography, culling information from hundreds of pages of transcribed interviews, Vincent's endless correspondence with friends and family and firsthand experiences and memories. Though you may pick up this affordable paperback edition to

learn more about Price's life-long career in horror, you may find that his other careers and his personal life are as intriguing.

—Mary-Beth Hollyer

**It Came From
Bob's Basement**

Bob Burns with John Michlig
Chronicle Books

I don't know if Bob Burns has any nieces or nephews, but I do know he'd be the coolest uncle ever. At various turns he's

been a movie prop builder, effects technician, kid's show host, fan mag publisher and the guy in the gorilla suit on *The Lucy Show*. He's also curator of the most astounding array of sci-fi, horror and fantasy props and costumes this side of Forrest Ackerman's place, and the Halloween displays at his LA home are the stuff of

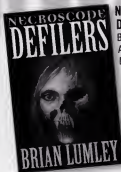
legend. What's even more impressive is his generous spirit and deep affection for his oft-underappreciated mentors and peers.

It's easy to forget that with a few exceptions – like monster makeup pioneer Jack Pierce and stop-motion animator Ray Harryhausen – special effects innovators were a largely invisible bunch before *Star Wars* knocked the industry for a loop in '77. Names like Paul Blaisdell and Wah Ming Chang may be unfamiliar to you, but these people were as vital to the development of the craft as later celeb-techs like Rick Baker



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—F. Paul Wilson, author of *The Tomb*

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and Tom Savini. Burns is passionate about preserving the works of these overlooked artists, particularly his friend Blaisdell who finally threw in the towel in the early '60s after years of being repeatedly screwed over by unscrupulous producers.

And speaking of production, many a corner was cut by the publishers of *It Came From Bob's Basement*. At 9 1/2" by 10" and stuffed with colour photos and reproductions, it's enough to bring out the Bob Burns in all of us.

—John W. Bowen

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Uncredited

The Design Image Group Inc.

Two new books from Design Image pay homage to those ever-fashionable, ever-effective icons of traditional horror – ghosts and winches. It's nice to know that such exhausted historical subject matter can still be revamped in the hands of an able imagination. *Bell, Book & Beyond* succeeds by offering twenty-one novel tales about those wicked females, whether they be seductive, grotesque, diabolical, or stone crazy. To a lesser degree, so does *Whispered From The Grave*, which offers fourteen creepy ghost stories that explore the swampy relations between the dead and the living.

Though *Bell, Book & Beyond* isn't really frightening, it does give fine credit to the fine art of camp. Tales like Nicholas Kaufmann's *Le Bête Est Morte*, about a raven haired French beauty who is a lot older than she appears, or John R. Platt's *That Old Black Magic*, which postulates the difference between Satan, Lucifer and the snake, are so wicked that one can only hope that movie rights have been optioned. More sobering is Eric Gregg's *Stadium Square*, about an old woman's power over the moods of others, which doesn't cease to disturb after it's been read. Each story takes a completely different approach to its supernatural heroines, spanning the gamut from stereotypes of old hags to comic-bookish monsters to soul-sucking pariahs. These nasty bits of fun are all the better when the girls are very, very bad.

Whispered From the Grave takes an equally diverse approach to its haunting subject matter, though sometimes with a little less effect. Tina L. Jens' *Damned Fool Man*, about a Bluesy mass-murdering ghost with a taste for female flesh, is a raunchy standout with its ball-breaking female lead, as is Edo van Belkom's *Sex After Life*, about a dead wife who finds a way to satisfy her man's libido until he pisses her off. There are a number of other choice pieces in the anthology, and though they may not be scary, what they lack in shivers they more than make up in atmosphere and originality.

—Nina Mouzitchka





REVIEWS BY GREG CHANE, TOM DRAGOWER, RIG GLENDON AND ARIAN LUPIN



NASH THE SLASH **Nosferatu**

CUTTHROAT PRODUCTIONS

There's a revival going on to write and/or orchestrate original music for the great silent, like Calnegi, Nosferatu and The Phantom of the Opera. Toronto's own Nash the Slash has been pushing that particular envelope for at least ten years. I remember catching an early live show with Nash performing to Nosferatu back in 1992. His score for Murnau's classic benefits hugely from his hands-on stage experience with the film. Nash shadows Murnau's plot from the sunny opening through the Borgo pass to the scuttling darkness of Shreck's vampires. Added to its original score are interpretations of Faust's Requiem and Saint-Saens' Danse Macabre, a nod to the tradition of scoring Nosferatu with dark classical music. A formidable stage presence (Nash is bandaged from head to toe and alternately plays electric violin, electric mandolin and keyboards), this one-man symphony of terror has brought new light — and shadows — to one of the genre's earliest cinematic triumphs.

-GC ★★★★★



CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON

MONSTROUS MOVIE MUSIC

Although it's the first time I've ever reviewed anything from this label, they've already impressed me with their

restored movie music from a few "jungle pictures," the likes of Tarzan (1934-42), 1959's The Alligator People and, of course, Universal's Creature From The Black Lagoon (1954). The reproductions are faithful to the point of sounding like re-mastings of the original recordings, which is a very good thing considering that I never cared much for re-recordings from any modern orchestra (especially with the word "pop" in its name). Conductor Masatoshi Mitsumoto dutifully leads the Radio Symphony Orchestra of Slovakia through the numbers, including 21 previously unavailable cues for the Creature score alone. Nonetheless, I always knew what I'm watching an early jungle movie (goose, pronounced percussion, primitive leitmotifs), and this is the sound here. As the title suggests, the music for Creature is the centerpiece, beginning with an eerie Prologue and leading into a well-paced score that follows the Gill-Men's every move. The sixteen-minute Alligator People suite also gets a few chills from an electric violin. As is befitting, producers have managed to cream more notes in here than a full-sized book, which makes this a treasure from the archives, for the archives.

-GC ★★★★★



VALENTINE **Various** **WARNER BROS.**

It's no secret that Valentine, starring David Brenner, was birthed in a corporate board room, timed to release on Valentine's Day as the horror flick to go with a bouquet of roses and a box of chocolates. But there was little love to be had. Valentine died at the box office and all we are left with is this, a record chock full of guitar heavy aural violence, the likes of Filler, Statix-X, Soulfly, Marilyn Manson (who can't stop quoting the Holy Bible on his Valentine's Day serenade) and others. Cupid's arrow breaks flesh on the Porno Holocaust remix of Rob

Zombie's Superbeast, as well as on Fitty Mind by a chick I never heard of who calls herself Amanda Ghost. Ditto for a very Marilyn Manson-sounding Orgy and Snake River Conspiracy's creepy song called Breed. Valentine doesn't play it by the numbers and, because of that, this turned out to be a decent intro to some pretty wicked sounds, many in the vein of hard guitar/electronics reminiscent of our good friends Rammstein (see below).

-GC ★★★★★



MIDNIGHT SYNDICATE **Enties of Delirium** **GATEWAY PRODUCTIONS**

As we all know, Halloween music is a genre unto itself, different from much of the spook music we normally feature in this column. The irony is, it's the only kind of music that is consistently scary to listen to. Really scary. Midnight Syndicate is a duo of soundscape artists who have mastered the art of goosing the flesh with a digital symphony and a real choir. Their latest album is choice audio theatre, a tale without words of unspeakable terrors at the Heiligenshat, a turn-of-the-century haunted asylum. Classical goth pieces invoke moonlit hallways, fog shrouded walkways and ineluctable unrelevence, both earthly and otherworldly. Gates of Delirium may properly be called music for a non-existent horror film, one that plays out in your head. This one does, but the shivers are all in the flesh.

-GC ★★★★★



RAMMSTEIN **Mutter** **REPUBLIC RECORDS/UNIVERSAL**

Machines into flesh, indeed Germany's premiere metal industrialists return with yet another album of choreographed razor rifing and fettes of aggression, though overall Mutter leans more towards Gothic horror than the fetishized violence of Sehnsucht. The album is a seamless listen that starts off slow, grows to life and reaches a mad crescendo prior to the quiet finale. Even though Mutter introduces nothing new to Rammstein's repertoire, I really dig the

military terror aesthetic of the music. As for the lyrics, I didn't understand a word, but they added significantly to the creep factor, especially those kids' voices caught live fires in the radiator.

-GC ★★★★★



SIX FEET UNDER **Graveyard Classics** **Song Conn**

Most people are divided on the idea of mixing stoner groove with death metal vocals, but Chris Barnes has been able to create some pretty fulfilling southern rock with his penchant for death-sleazebag lyrics. The concept of a death metal band doing a cover album is met with some hilarious predictions, but somehow Graveyard Classics lacks the sense of humour needed for a prised live show. There's some pretty fun stuff here, like The Dead Kennedy's California Uber Alles and the Sex Pistols' classic rendition of The Who's Substitute, but the success of an album of covers ultimately resides with the source material, and the majority of the choices here are just plain bad. I mean, songs like "TNT" or "Smoke On The Water" will never be good no matter who records them, and covering Sweet Leaf was just so predictable, even if admittedly appropriate. The only material that actually gets the blood flowing are the tracks written by Exodus, Angelwreck and Venom, but death metal covering death metal is more than a little redundant. Graveyard Classics is okay, but anyone with a strong preference for Chris Barnes' Cannibal Corpse days will hate this album.

-AL ★★★★★



GIRLS UNDER GLASS **Nightmares** **VAN RICHTER RECORDS**

A sinister gargoyle on the cover and one of the best band names in a while marks Nightmares entry through the festering gates of the Audio Drome with much pomp and circus dance. A vast arrangement of sounds and atmospheres come framed in, but not confined to, the electronic dark wave style. A collection of old, new and remixed stuff, Nightmares opens ominously with an electro-fied version of John Carpenter's Halloween

The Sound of Hammer

gdi records restores an era of fright film music
from Britain's golden age of horror



THE VAMPIRE LOVERS Harry Robinson

Even though it marked "a bold new direction" for Britain's noble Hammer House of Horrors, *The Vampire Lovers* stands as one of its best and best-known movies. Was it due to then-newcomer Ingrid Pitt in Hammer's first female lead? Or was it the titillating lesbian subtext that director Roy Ward Baker so heavily banked on? Whatever the case, *The Vampire Lovers* was an instant classic, spawning two sequels and paving the way for the vampire kizzie film boom of the 1970s. Composer Harry Robinson was also a newcomer to the Hammer studios at the time, and his score understandably preserves the spirit of the classically trained Hammer staples before him. His music tries hard to evoke a Gothic period feel while relying on shuddering strings and menacing percussion for effect. The result is vintage Hammer: very British and very classy, with a full-bodied fragrance of sensuality and menace intact. -RG R.R.R.R.R.



TWINS OF EVIL Harry Robinson

By the time part three of Hammer's Lesbian Vampire Cycle was set to shoot, the studio had refined its recipe for horror erotica to an art. They cast Playboy centerfolds Mary and Madeline Collins as the twins and brought back Peter Cushing in the role of witchhunter Gustav Weir. Also returning was composer Harry Robinson, who was given a full orchestra and used it — his score is the most grandiose and bombastic of the trilogy. Caddy, it has, a whiff of spaghetti western in it, which Robinson was apparently inspired to insert after having noted the high number of action

sequences in early cuts of the film. To his surprise (and ours), it actually works. Of course, Robinson was wise to also draw from the traditional scores he had transformed in the two previous movies. -RG R.R.R.R.R.



THE HAMMER FRANKENSTEIN Various

Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed, *Curse of Frankenstein*, *Revenge of Frankenstein*, *Frankenstein Created Woman*, *The Horror of Frankenstein* and *Frankenstein and the Monster From Hell*. No surprise that the glorious house of Hammer reinvented horror by reimagining one of the genre's biggest draws. This compilation aims to celebrate the mad doctor's monster during his tenure at Britain's infamous House of Horrors through the music of Hammer daddies James Bernard, along with that of Leonardo Saldedo, Don Banks and Malcolm Williamson. As a traditionalist, I gravitated to Bernard's scores more than the others, but each piece has its moment. The CD comes beautifully illustrated with lengthy notes on each of the productions. -GC R.R.R.R.



THE HAMMER VAMPIRE Various

I'm guessing the only reason *Horror of Dracula* never made it onto this compilation is because an entire CD of music has been devoted to that particular movie. The Hammer Vampire collects music from some of the House's less notorious lang films, including *The Legend of the 7 Golden Vampires*, *Kiss of the Vampire*, *Vampire Circus* and — my fave — *Lust for the Vampire* (which starred the beyond beautiful Yvette Steingard). Hammer did an admirable

job of resurrecting Stoker's *Dracula* with in their sensibility, which included reading music from James Bernard, David Whitaker and Harry Robinson. These particular selections are loud and overly dramatic and, unfortunately, held little appeal to me outside of the movies themselves. If you feel like I do, you may still want to buy this but will find yourself skipping every second track. -GC R.R.R.R.



SCARS OF DRACULA James Bernard

Movie number five in Hammer's *Dracula* saga, *Scars of Dracula* was one of the bloodiest films the movie studio produced. Amidst the carnage were vampire bats ravaging a priest's face and a scene where Christopher Lee is called to quibble the blood from a girl's abdominal knife wound — two scenes which undoubtedly led a critic to recently dub Scott's "true" film Hammer's most prolific composer. James Bernard, was called in to bring sound to the bloody goings-on, with a score that turned out to be one of his better ones. Bernard updates the traditional Hammer sound with a host of dramatic flourishes that highlight the brutality of the film even while preserving a sense of pace. Creepy and foreboding. -GC R.R.R.R.



THE CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB Carlo Martelli

I'm guessing Carlo Martelli's assistable score for *Curse of the Mummy's Tomb* fit the film like a shirt. Although I've never seen Michael Cresswell (son of Hammer chairman James) debut, Martelli's big brass scores go a long way to suggesting the visuals. The film wasn't one of Hammer's better-known

titles (though it should have been with a title like that), but nevertheless it does have the distinction of being a Hammer movie based on a classic monster that wasn't a gothic period piece. Ultimately, *Curse* was a profitable, if understated, feature which the British press of the time dismissed as "gristly hokum." You read between the lines. -GC R.R.



THE LOST CONTINENT Gerard Schürmann

Hammer's foray into the realm of giant squids, huge scorpion crabs and menacing claims may have left a less than thrilling legacy, but composer Gerard Schürmann made the best of it. This classically trained Schürmann had a list of impressive credits, including *Horror of the Black Museum*, *Kongo* and Hammer's own *The Camp On Blood Island*. His dedication to experimentation and fantasy was well suited to *Lost Continent's* bizarre subject matter and then-unrivaled budget. Schürmann gets pretty far out on the film's jazzy title song (the CD supplies two alternative versions), before getting to basics on the score proper. As expected, the one has the orchestra bleating for dear life in trying to evoke the mood of beetles from the sea invading a ship. Includes four bonus tracks total and an excerpt from an interview with Schürmann himself, discussing his score. -GC R.R.R.



THE DEVIL RIDES OUT James Bernard

By then having abandoned its devotion to gothic horror, Hammer set out, in 1968, to film its first Dennis Wheatley novel, this one called *The Devil Rides Out* and starring Hammer cost Christopher Lee. Despite production concerns, the movie turned out to be one of the most successful in Hammer's history. James Bernard had by then scored three films for the studio and jumped at the chance to do *Devil*. He turned out a score that is creepy and luring and has the ability to prance when it needs to. This release includes extensive liner notes on the production and quotes from the cast's principles, including Lee and an introduction from Bernard himself. -GC R.R.R.R.

there and keeps the creeps rolling from there. This reverse chronological anthology captures a strange collection of dreamscapes and mental escapades that European goth and industrial punks have come to expect from the Hamburg crossover band. Tight beats, looped riffs and occasionally tossed-in German lyrics make for a good introduction to the band's eleven-year history. *Traces of Joy Division on I Will Follow* You keep slow and sad bass lines hopelessly romantic, and earlier tracks like *Ten Million Dollars* remind us North Americans of *White Zombie* or *Nonesuch* with a serious edge.

-TD 8.8.8.8



SON OF SAM
Songs from the Earth
Nitro Records

The band credits for *Son of Sam* read like a cast of minor heroes and villains in the ambiguous sub-genre of death rock. Davey Havok is the man responsible for bringing vinyl, mesh and makeup to skate punk through his main vehicle AF.

Steve Zing and London May helped pioneer dark rock from behind a drum kit in Samhain, while Todd Youth's role with genre giant Darz is so minor, many fiends may not even recognize his name. Regardless, *Son of Sam* is pretty much cult monster music in the making. The band garbs themselves in funeral attire and assume their death poses while promising us that "The Horror Begins" on April 17, 2001. Blatant Samhainisms are evident on tracks like *Evernight*, and *In The Hills*, while a dark blue Darz devilstomp shows up from time to time. The rest of *Songs from the Earth* is rounded out by an old school punk drive, made a little creepier with the sprinkling of organ parts. No doubt some will say *Son of Sam*'s sum is less than its parts, but I'd just as soon disregard those criticisms. *Songs from the Earth* is death rock from some of the blackest hearts in underground music, it's music from those who truly understand, and it's made for sick people like you and me. -AL 8.8.8.8



EERIE LN.
Drinking Songs for
the Dearly Departed
Mutha Records

The dead have gotta drink too, right? Damn straight, they do! Thankfully, Boo Gruesome, Kayden Gimmer, Evil Lind, Hell Hound and Von Creepy have eleven new songs to host a brew to. Spawned in Fort Worth Texas, *Eerie Ln.* (pronounced Eerie Lane) make no bones about the obvious. *Malice/Samhain* Darz influence in sound, look, lyrics and attitude. Picture Glenn Darz with throat cancer growling over harmonic breakdowns, Sabbath bass lines, buzz saw grind riffs and spooky samples for the true Eerie Ln. experience of all out horror-core monster metal. Not to mention Gruesome's personal artwork, which fits our beloved motif like a bloody glove on a severed hand. Sure, it's as detestable as horror punk gets, but that's the point. *Voodoo Music Box* prides tracking over treating in its all-out orange

and black assault on metal mediocrity, including a killer hidden cover of Jerry Lee Lewis' *Great Balls Of Fire*. The only real downside to *Voodoo Music Box* is the absence of the slightly more melodic moments that marked their first album *Tenthirtyone*. With the emergence of bands like *Ghoultown* (RM #20) and now *Eerie Ln.*, the idea of visiting the Lone Star State has gotten downright frightening. -TD 8.8.8.8



FEAR FACTORY
Digimortal
Roadrunner

Fear Factory have been around for some time now, enough to survive recent success which has brought on musical changes and alienated the hardcore fans. What hasn't changed, however, is FF's dismal view of the future. As vocalist Burton Bell told us recently, *Fear Factory* is about "anything that makes you uncomfortable, that threatens your ideals." Their mandate is intact on the band's fourth and latest, *Digimortal*, and

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is especially evidenced on Acres Of Skin, a song based on the non-fiction book of the same name which apparently documents secret tests on humans conducted by the government. "They weren't forced to do it, but they weren't enlightened as to the effects of what was going to happen," said Bell. "To me, that's really dark. That's real horror." Lyrical concepts such as these expose some of the more horrific elements of science fiction which first inspired the band to take up their sombre journey. "I grew up watching horror movies, sci-fi movies, and the music that we make is meant to be a soundtrack to these images we create," said Bell. "We are creating a movie with our music: if it scares you, so be it. If it makes you think, even better." -AL R R R R

The new five-song EP from a band we heard from a few months back (RAM18) boasts drawing and passionate fem vocals from singer Julie that lean much closer to Donna of L7 than Dandrea or Seussie. A song called Proceeds mixes poetic lyrics with deep, crunching bass lines and harsh riffs under otherwise traditional goth lyrics, but sung with punk passion on the edge of angst. Some good dark atmospheric stuff with an angry shot of energy not found in a lot of would-be spooky stuff out there. Features one song with Mike Carls from Fear of God. -TD R R R R



CARFAX ABBEY
Carfax Abbey
(Independent)

Named after Count Dracula's infamous landing place in Britain, Philly freak show Carfax Abbey have the unique ability to slide between Buckhead-type hyper-nooding, gothic anthem, and standard industrial all in one song. Synth and digital percussion, layers of pounding bass

and guitar, keys and the occasional mandolin give their self-titled CD an indistinguishable feel which could simply be called uneven, but we'll go with the musical equivalent of some form of bene psychosis. The unexplained, spooky and suspenseful give the disc a feel that's less horror than science fiction, a kind of space-goth hybrid carved out of a metal shell. Lyrics point a finger at the concentration camp nature of society and the resulting madman it spawns. But what really stands out is the occasional shot of funk and soul, which adds just a small dose of Frisbone and George Clinton into the NIN/Nitzer Ebb industrial-inspired whine. Available through www.carfaxabbey.com. -TD R R R



MENTALLO AND THE FIXER
Return to Grimpen Ward
Metropolis Records

Texas bros Dwayne and Gary Dissing of Mentallo and the Fixer named the band over a decade ago after two long forgotten comic book characters. Vaguely billed as "a comic retrospective of revamped material" Return to Grimpen Ward links up classic Mentallo stuff like Legion Of Lopers and False Prophets, as well as some lesser-known oddities. Standard industrial and techno themes play off high-tech synth elements with results better than you'd expect. Download ambient vibes on Resonant Echo and no shortage of sequencing keep misadventure and quiet nihilism in the forefront. This industrial new wave digs its melancholy fangs into the diseased flesh of Shimmy Puppy and Killing Joke. Grimpen Ward uses the isolation factor via samples and lyrics, painting human existence with a black brush of grim reality, false hope and forgone conclusions. -TD R R R



DARKWELL
Susperia
Napalm Records

As a horror buff it's easy to be lured in by this album. That moody cover painting by German Gothic artist Lisa Klingenschmid breathes melancholia, and Susperia is an understandably appropriate

title for a Goth metal record. However, you may be disappointed to know that the band drowns naming their album after Argento's oeuvre, and instead claim inspiration from Longfellow's poem of the same name. Regardless, I suppose Darkwell's discriminating and ethereal sound could fit rather nicely in some of Argento's angry fairy tales, like say Phenomena and (naturally enough) Susperia (although I wouldn't trade Goble). Reminiscent of early Theatre of Tragedy before they went electronic, Darkwell aren't afraid to dip into the traditional metal fare with double bass drumming and powerful doom guitars. The emphasis, however, is on creating an ethereal epic, delivered most explicitly on the Two Souls Creature Trilogy, and most successfully with Realm Of Darkness. Creepy organ parts add to a traditional gothic atmosphere, while the songs are structured around singer Alex's delicate and professionally trained voice. Some will praise this album for adding unique harmonies to Goth-metal, but I would rather see the band just drop the heaviness and concentrate on creating grim musical landscapes. -AL R R R



MESH
The Point At Which
It Falls Apart
Metropolis Records

Ever since 84, Mesh have been trying to make a name for themselves by intertwining aspects of synth-pop with industrial à la Depeche Mode meets Nine Inch Nails. Their second album, re-released by Metropolis, works best when blending together sombre orchestrations with bits of piano descenderos (as in These Empty Rooms), or their nu-wave licks (as on Not Prepared). However, the filler rambles closer to what might happen if Martin Gore got his hands on the discarded lyrics. This Reznor deemed too cheeseball for NIN Drones singer Hookings on It Scares Me, "I wish that there was more to this/Flesh to loss/Caught between the magic that you gave to me and the fear that you might leave." The Point At Which It Falls Apart is a good enough take on the genre, but an unnecessary one. A wise man once wrote that there's a fine line between intro and regurgitation, and unfortunately this one falls just a little too close to the latter. -TD R R



Nightmare Pop and Goth Remix

CLAIRE VOYANT
Time and the Maiden
Metropolis Records

The second release from this Sacramento three piece is a bit of an anomaly. Their unique sound is not quite mainstream enough for the masses but likely still not unconventional enough to cause any real stir in the underground. Its temples to call it gothic ambient, but you could also go with either real power pop, or take the band's own tag of dream pop. Whatever the case, the resulting sound slides back and forth between all the above and maybe more. I've always believed that any good new CD shouldn't easily draw comparisons to any established band's trademark sound. Singer Victoria's emotionally powerful Seussie Sioux vocals aside, Time and the Maiden feather touches a lot of light and dark territory via piano and guitar licks backed by a not-too cold electronic synth/ambient backing. Too good to ignore for fans of goth or ambient. And with a little more exposure and the right marketing, Claire Voyant could really help bring the gothic thing back into the public ear. -TD R R R R



CLAIRE VOYANT
Time Again
Metropolis Records

This North California trio have been crafting soft New Age goth with the occasional hint for over five years. Time Again offers a collection of remixes inspired by their dreamy, electro-based Time and the Maiden, fashioned by electro masters like Front 242, Government and WVU Nation. Still very much in the forefront is the band's trademark airy female vox that emerges and sustains gracefully over the heartbeat techno backing. The remixes work well in giving singer Victoria's drawn-out vocal style its due, to the point where the vocals actually seem to lead the music. Admittedly, Time Again often comes dangerously close to crossing the line into dance goth and it's all very accessible to the masses. However, a little bluesy sax gives the Bittersweet "LSD remix" the lazy, romantic feel of a gothic cocktail party and the rest comes off not unlike The Cure's Mixed Up album as compared to the source material. On the whole, a real nice entry for fans of the band with a little something for everyone who likes a spoonful of trance in their daily bowl of goth crunchies. -TD R R R R

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THORNS
Thorns

MOONFOG PRODUCTIONS

Eerie, riffing, a dark, brooding atmosphere, and unremitting energy combine to create what can only be described as funeral music. It sounds strange, but Thorns are one of the quietest black metal groups I've ever heard, and have thereby created something unique in the world of dark music. Adding to the brooding atmosphere are the album credits, which list two vocalists, a drummer, and someone in charge of "visuals." Thorns features members of some black metal heavyweights, including Satyricon and Mayhem, so it's not entirely surprising that the group have in essence created a new style of black metal, one in which the darkness is a little more intricate, song structures increasingly quirky and bizarre. I couldn't figure out what these guys were singing about, but judging from the song titles, it's a little more so-fii than outright horror. -AL 3.5/5



IKON
On the Edge of Forever
METROPOLIS RECORDS

IKON may be properly called Australia's modern day answer to Bauhaus and Sisters of Mercy. Clean production and a lot of dark string work make for an accessible, mainstream slice of doom and gloom. Standard putty hypnobats back moody vocals singing sombre lyrics, that only really seem to work when playing off against the more intricate guitar harmonies. Pretty typical goth rock with that overdone drum machine sound and Peter Murphy doom-crooning. And why is it that regional accents are never recognizable when sung? A real thick Aussie accent just might have given On the Edge an edge of its own. Sadly, not much separating this one from the glut of gloomy goth-based electro stuff out there right now. On the Edge certainly has a handful of moving musical arrangements but still feels like something's missing. -TD 3.5/5



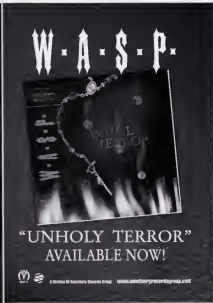
DEMONICON
Condemned Creation
ROOT OF ALL EVIL RECORDS

It's always a feather in the cap for Audio Drome writers when death metal bands throw in clips from their favourite horror movies, seemingly just to let us know they still care. Seriously though, the lyrical subject matter for death-genre bands can get a little tiresome after a while, so an injection of nods to films like The Serpent and the Rainbow, Hellraiser, and uh, I think Pel Seminary 2, is a refreshing whiff of stink. Technical riffing and crushing brutality comparable to Cryptopsy helps paint images of cruelty and sickness, which I suppose is not totally in synch with this band's love for '80s horror. Regardless, Demonicon are progressive enough to keep things interesting, with an overall package that will have added appeal to those with a love for all things dark, despite how punishing the music may be. -AL 3.5/5



ENTWINE
Gone
SPINEFARM RECORDS

Given that Gone sounds vastly different from the goth-metal band's debut (The Treasures Within Hearts), it took me a little while to remember who Entwine were exactly. But I guess that's inevitable in the wake of a major shuffling of band members, including the new androgynous vocals of Mika Turunena. Anyhow, I found myself dusting off my copy of Treasures for reference points and quickly realized the difference. While they started out using trademark goth-metal effects (creepy piano interludes, darker, more menacing vocals), the atmosphere on Gone has a glossed-over mainstream air to it. Melodic, steady and predictable, it is not totally unlike a (much) heavier version of Concrete Blonde. Lyrics cover most of the goth staples (suicide, lost love, hopelessness) and are delivered in a thick, morose style that manages to both drone and soar at the same time.



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Enthe are as dark and dreary as they come, although the only thing separating them from radio-friendly goth is the weight. Heaviness is the only thing that betrays Enthe as a one-line death metal band. -AL R R R



**W.A.S.P.
Unholy Terror
METAL-IS RECORDS**

W.A.S.P. wouldn't have a lot going for them if it weren't for the religious right. I mean, what would Blackie Lawless be singing about, if not the fundamentalist ideals of his critics? Having founded his band on gore theatrics and a litany of blasphemy, it's hard to think of W.A.S.P. as ever doing anything else. On *Unholy Terror*, Lawless does his best to continue the battle with America's moral majority, targeting religion, murder at the schoolyard, hypocrisy and, oh yeah, religion. Even on the enticingly titled *Who Stayed Baby Jane*, lyrically it's the same old thing: Too bad, because Lawless and fellow enforcer (andible) Chris Holmes ought

to be commended for the music, too often lost behind all that diabolical sniggering. *Unholy Terror* is heavy but it's light, if you know what I mean, sounding at the best of times like Sabbath in the middle years (on *Euphonia*) or an updated Alice Cooper (on *Raven Heart*). -GC R R R/2



**KALMA
Swampford
SPIKEFARM RECORDS**

Hailing from Finland, Kalma share with fellow country men Children of Bodom a technical style of orchestral death metal, as well as a propensity to write morbid tales inspired by the dismal landscape, which in this case is the swamp around Pudasjärvi. The band will try to bore you with ludicrous metaphors for the *Swampford*, being "something that describes our path from the very beginning to this moment," but all you need to know is that Kalma, translated from the Finnish dialogue of Karilinen, means "to the grave." Songs about sin, Satan, and

souls put for sale prove that these guys really are going to hell, whether or not they care to admit it. -AL R R R/2



**SOILWORK
A Predator's Portrait
NUCLEAR BLAST**

When *Soilwork* released *The Chanhearth Machine* last year, they quickly established themselves as one of today's most important Swedish metal bands. Somehow, they managed to combine keyboards, Iron Maiden leads and black metal vocals without coming off badly, at the same time paving the way for even more progressive and dynamic acts. The much anticipated follow up, *A Predator's Portrait* reveals that things have changed in the *Soilwork* camp, although not necessarily for better or worse. The injection of *Sepultura* groove here and there seems like a cop-out, and many failed attempts at clean vocals are equally disappointing. On the other hand, *A Predator's Portrait* is easily a more slick and frightening affair concep-

tually. The album reads like a textbook for the criminally insane, what the band calls the Asylum Theme. Checkout *Like The Average Slutker*, *Neurotic Rampage*, and the title track - all of them explorations into the minds of those who take up murder to become Gods. I guess all those black metal-related homicides finally got to them. -AL R R R



**THYRRANE
The Spirit of Rebellion
SPIKEFARM RECORDS**

Just when you thought that black metal was going to change on you, Finland's Thyrrane emerges to seemingly dispel any myths that the genre is about something other than Satanism. Hold onto your horns though, because Thyrrane don't just blaspheme like any other corpse-painted sickos, these guys have penned their Satanic odes in verse, Bible-style. Now you can quote from the book of Thyrrane at parties: "Soulless and broken by profane agony! Struggling and yielding before insanity!" That's from

LACUNA COIL

unleashed memories



Lacuna Coil return with their third new album, *Unleashed Memories*, produced by Massimo Sestini (Dante, Manic Street Preachers). The band have called a masterpiece by combining sweet and critically acclaimed melodies with a driving style of vocal style and musical intensity, which captures the true magical essence of LACUNA COIL.

IN STORES MARCH 20th, 2003



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EMPIRE - Neil Jeffries

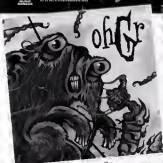
"He pioneered electronic dance music." MARILYN MANSON

"After hearing Gary Numan's 'Cars' on the radio, I knew I wanted to make music with synthesisers."

TRENT REZNOR, *Nine Inch Nails*

"He is cool. He was the only electronic act I liked..."

PRODIGY, *Liam Howlett*



From the first single, "Cracker", to the final track, "Minus", **"Welt"** is a bold and complete musical statement, specialising in a radical and thrilling deconstruction of the musical form, mutating and fusing it into their own unique aural vision.

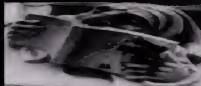
Welt

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Puppy**
innovator
Ohgr

returns
from the
studio
with
debut
album



SAPPHIRE ODE



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Soulless And Broken, 4:12 It seems like a new band emerges every now and then just to see if they can outdo on the sheer preposterousness of their mission from Hell (see God Dethroned, Unleashed Power, Gorguts) but The Spirit of Rebellion pretty much takes the cake. I guess we should take this as our warning. No church will be left un-charred. -AL 3.3.3.3



OPETH Blackwater Park KOCH RECORDS

Like the melancholic artwork which surrounds Opeth's *Blackwater Park* a thick, sluggish, and even mysterious atmosphere pervades throughout the new effort by Sweden's monarchy of progressive metal. From the devastating eruption of *The Leper Affinity* to the many lengthy acoustic compositions, the whole of *Blackwater Park* is veiled in a darkness that gooses flesh on *Dirge* For November and *The Funeral Portrait*. This album isn't so much dark as it is pitch black! Buyer beware though like most progressive metal, Opeth isn't for everyone. Like pink rock? Forget about it. Opeth has more in common with Pink Floyd than it does with all the good old Scandinavian church-burning metal. But if dark rock is your thing, check this out. Just hope you don't mind those demon-from-hell vocals. -AL 3.3.3.3



DIMMU BORGIR Puritanical Euphoric Misanthropia NUCLEAR BLAST

On *Puritanical Euphoric Misanthropia*, Dimmu Borgir continue in their quest to be the absolute champions of depravity through the release of albums with three worded titles, following up on *Spiritual Black Dimensions*, *Godless Savage Garden*, and *Eitrone Darkness Triumphant*. Translated as "dark castle," Dimmu Borgir take their name from an area of caves and rocks formed by a lava-lake in Iceland (one of these caves looks like a cathedral). One of the most widely embraced of the black metal throng, they have received constant comparisons to *Cradle of Filth* (due to an

overuse of blood, naked women, and corpse-paint) but the two actually stand quite far apart as black metal goes. No moodily vampiric elements here, just pure unadulterated Satanism, a stamp DIM take to such extremes that their own label has been known to refuse to print the band's lyrics. Dimmu Borgir embody the harshest, most violent side of black metal, away from the dark atmosphere for which the genre has won so many fans. While the intro sounds like something from a sci-fi TV show soundtrack, the rest of the album takes on the role of a merciless executioner, assailing the listener with levels of sonic vehemence unequalled. Despite the over the top make-up and costumes, Dimmu Borgir lack the sense of humor that their British counterparts are known for, and truly come off as the most genuinely menacing of the lot. Of course, their covering of a Twisted Sister song would seem to call that theory into question. -AL 3.3.3.3 1/2

THE HAUNTING



THE HAUNTING The Haunting KAT IN THE BAG

While very little is known to me about *The Haunting* I make a point of checking out any band named after a good (hell, any) horror movie. You'd figure there would have to be something to a band whose set includes *Book Of Blood*, *Hammer Films* and *Queen Of The Night*, right? Well, don't get fooled by the goth-inspired front and back cover art because everything in-between reeks of stale metal. A lot of tempo change-ups, high E noodling and over-pronounced 'Y's. It takes a lot more than couple of riffy Jayne County guitar hooks and a few vague horror clichés on the lyric sheet to really arouse the keepers of the Drome. About as relevant as the film's 1990 remake -TD 3



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DIMMU BORGIR



Puritanical Euphoric Misanthropy

One of the greatest black metal bands on the planet, Dimmu Borgir, unleash their highly anticipated, superior new album *Puritanical Euphoric Misanthropy* on March 20th. Catch them on tour this Spring with Cannibal Corpse, The Haunted and Lamb Of God. Come worship at the altar of blackness if you dare!



For All Tid



Enthrone Darkness Triumphant



Godless Savage Garden



Spiritual Black Dimensions

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GAMES by Marco Pecota
RULES *Genre:* at gross, *Developer:* m. k., *Version:* 1.0



A COOL DRINK

Onimusha Warlords
 CAPCOM
 PlayStation 2

The must-have PlayStation 2 title of the year, *Onimusha Warlords* combines the flavour of great anime titles like *Ninja Scroll* with a taste of western gunslinger films. Along the way it takes full advantage of the new PS2 engine to convey realistic emotion and character animation as well as violent and smooth-flowing attacks. The backgrounds – waterfalls, wind effects, fire, weather and more – are truly awesome.

The game is based on an epic saga of 16th century Japan inspired by the battle scenes of famed Japanese director Akira Kurosawa. Your character, a master swordsman, is tasked with the rescue of the kidnapped princess (I shit you not). Thankfully, producers have an eye for gore on the level of the first *Resident Evil* games (and, incidentally, the storyline here is by the same guys who did *RE*). True to form, *Onimusha Warlords* is filled with enough monsters, zombies and rivers of blood to quench the thirst of the hardcore horror gamer.

Playability: Carnivore
Graphics: Carnivore
Shivers: Omnivore

CLIVE'S CREEP FEST

Clive Barker's Undying
 Electronic Arts Inc.
 PC Game

More and more PC games are taking their cues from horror movies, with an increasing emphasis on atmosphere, suspense, cinematic visuals and gore. Of course, all of this is expected from Clive Barker's hotly anticipated *Undying*, a very cool, spookiest of a game that keeps you on the edge of your mouse buttons, desperately trying to avoid the gruesome death that threatens you at every turn.

Set in Ireland in the 1920s, players are cast in the role of Patrick Galloway, a Poe-esque protagonist who has been summoned to a grand estate by an old friend. Apparently, his friend's siblings have all recently disappeared or died and something sinister is afoot. Translation: the dead are coming back to life.

The game kicks into high gear as a first person shoot-em-up with a modified Unreal Tournament engine that's slicker than the blood on the walls. Players are equipped with an assortment of cutlery weapons, such as the Molotov Cocktail and Scythe of the Celt, along with spells with innovative names like "Skull Storm".

Game programmers have designed several foreboding settings, including a destroyed monastery and the cursed city of Oneiros, which will creep you to the bone with its accompanying weird sounds and noises.

Of course, no Clive Barker vehicle would be complete without the abominations from the master's twisted imagination, and in this sense *Undying* does not disappoint. Check out the official website at www.undying.ea.com for some advance imagery and a few gory details.

Playability: Carnivore **Graphics:** Carnivore **Shivers:** Carnivore

BABES, BOOBS AND BASHED BRAINS

Heavy Metal: FAKK 2
 Ritual Entertainment/Gathering of Developers
 PC Game

Straight from the pages of *Heavy Metal* comes a game that delivers equal parts babes, boobs and bashed brains. You play the cyberpunk wet-dream Julie (FAKK 2) and navigate her – action/adventure style – through a surreal and futuristic landscape typical of an issue of the magazine.

As you may have guessed, the 3D environment is impressive; there is considerable effort expended on the high texturing and detailing, along with smooth play and cool hard hitting attacks which include swords, bombs and all

sorts of bizarre guns. You have the added bonus of equipping both hands, allowing for multi-armed attacks and double the fire-power.

Heavy Metal: FAKK 2 has some good gore, but the fear factor is disappointingly low. Still, there are few pleasures in life that rival playing a chick with enhanced skills and super enhanced breasts as she carves a bullet ridden path through a post-Dickensian future.

Playability: Carnivore **Graphics:** Carnivore **Shivers:** Vegan



MIDEAST MAYHEM

Mummy: The Resurrection
 White Wolf Game Studios – RPG Sourcebook

I've always been interested in Egypt and other Middle Eastern myths, which is why I found this RPG a fascinating read and an intriguing game.

The setting is the present, and players take the role of a mummy, only these ones aren't old and decrepit and walking around wrapped in bandages. These mummies are young, powerful and immortal, and they're ruled by Osiris, who created them. As soldiers against the agents of Set and Apophis, they have sworn eternal battle against their corrupt will to enslave the world.

This book is designed to work in conjunction with any of White Wolf's core rule books that contain the basic rules of the Storyteller system, such as *Vampire: The Masquerade* or *Mage: The Ascension*. As expected, *Mummy: The Resurrection* includes a host of new spells like *Sin-Eating* and *Sever Soul*, as well as the new rules, background and creatures necessary to play in the Middle Eastern World of Darkness.

Playability: Carnivore **Graphics:** Omnivore **Shivers:** Omnivore



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SOLD OUT!



The cover of Rue Morgue magazine features a central illustration of a woman with pale skin and dark hair, wearing a purple garment. She holds a large, ornate dagger or knife across her chest. The background is dark and textured. At the top, the title "RUE MORQUE" is written in a stylized, gothic font. Below it, there are several headlines and teasers in various fonts, some in italics. A barcode is visible at the bottom left corner.

The cover of Rue Morgue magazine features a man in a hat and a woman in a dark dress. The title "RUE MORQUE" is at the top in a stylized font. Below it, the text "THE MAGAZINE OF THE GOTHIC" is visible. The cover also includes the names "JAMES B. HARRIS" and "JAMES B. HARRIS" and the text "THE MAGAZINE OF THE GOTHIC".

[illegible][illegible]

The image shows the cover of a Japanese magazine titled 'Ride Magazine'. The cover features a black and white photograph of a motorcycle, possibly a Honda, with the word 'HONDA' visible on the fuel tank. The magazine's title 'Ride Magazine' is at the top in a large, stylized font. Below the title, there is a small text 'Ride on 125' and a larger text 'HONDA' with '125' below it. At the bottom left, there is a barcode and some small text. The overall design is sleek and modern, typical of a motorcycle enthusiast magazine.

RUE MORGUE

First Feature

GINGER JAGS

A Tale of Terror

A Film by JAMES H. HANCOCK

CASTING BY JAMES HANCOCK

Produced by JAMES HANCOCK

Screenplay by JAMES HANCOCK

Directed by JAMES HANCOCK

Issue #14
RuleCop and the return of
cyber/updates; future arms; Soviet
Cybercom; Australia; 2000.

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 Excerpt interview with William P.
 Blatty; Terror on TV: Wampers Beach
 Bikers; Pamela Williams 36

Issue #11
The scariest book of the year, *House of Leaves*, Part 1: The Delectable, Insatiable House of Leaves, 2006, \$19.95

Issue #18
Shadows of the Waspire and German
Expressionism, Alice Cooper inter-
views: Blue Witch comes, more...

Issue #118
 Previews the 13th Special Issue: James
 H. Hansen Overviews, New Congress's
 Budget: Conflict of Fifth, 98.

Issue #20
Ginger Snaps and Werewolves of the
Silver Screen, Buchheit, Charles
Pewman, page 86

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ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN

USA 1948

Starring Bud Abbott, Lou Costello and Lon Chaney Jr.

Directed by Charles T. Borton

Written by John Grant, Robert Lees and Frederic Rinaldo

I am often asked to cite my favourite movies of all time, and invariably *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* makes the list. I first saw the film on television with my father on a snowy Sunday afternoon and what I loved about it then is still what I love about it now. *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* was the most successful of the underrated duo's career with the exception of their breakthrough feature *Back to Back* made six years earlier. In the years after *Back to Back* Bud and Lou's popularity lessened to the point of serious concern. Universal Pictures, who weren't faring much better, were coming off a year that saw them losing almost \$4 million in 1947. The idea was then hit on to make the Universal-owned *Frankenstein* franchise with the Universal-owned Abbott and Costello franchise for a throw of the dice.

Script duties were handed to John Grant, Robert Lees, and Frederic Rinaldo. They turned in a script called *The Brain of Frankenstein* and everyone was excited at the prospects – everyone except Lou Costello who didn't find it funny in the least (ironic given the fact that his performance in it is now considered one of his finest). The script was tinkered with while the casting process began. Bela Lugosi agreed to reprise his role as Count Dracula (again, this was probably the last bit of dignified screen acting Lugosi did), Lon Chaney Jr. came on board to reprise his famous Wolf Man role, and Glenn Strange was hired to play the *Frankenstein* monster.

Strange had played the role twice before (*The House of Frankenstein*, *The House of Dracula*) but was not the first choice for this film – the first choice was Boris Karloff. Karloff turned the role down because he didn't want to parody the character that was so important to him. He loved Bud and Lou and appeared in two films with them (*Abbott and Costello Meet Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Abbott and Costello Meet the Killer, Boris Karloff*), but he flatly refused to play the *Frankenstein* monster in this film.

In actuality, the *Frankenstein* monster ended up being played by both Glenn Strange and Lon Chaney Jr. Strange had injured his foot on the set and could not physically play the scene that had him throwing a woman out a laboratory window. Chaney agreed to step in and if you look closely it is easy to see that *Frankenstein* all of a sudden looks like Lon Chaney Jr. in that scene. The day that Strange made his return he was involved in another injury – only this time it was to Lou Costello. Lou missed his mark during a scene and Strange hit Lou flush in the face with a door. After being unconscious for a few moments Lou continued but was nervous around Strange for the rest of the shoot.

What makes this film so wonderful is the earnest approach director Charles Borton took to the material. This was standard Abbott and Costello stuff. Bud plays Chick Young. Lou plays Wilbur Grey – they are Florida delivery men who inadvertently got mixed up in a plot by Dracula to revive *Frankenstein's* monster. The remarkable thing is that when Bud and Lou are on screen, this is an Abbott and Costello movie – when they are not, it is a Universal horror movie. When the two elements blend it is done with seamless skill – it is funny and creepy at the same time (there is a hilarious moment when the towering *Frankenstein* monster climbs out of a crate in front of the petrified Lou – the Frank Skinner music score swells and reverberates – then *Frankenstein* looks at Lou and it is the eight foot monster that jumps with a frightened start at the sight of Lou Costello).

The movie was shot in gorgeous black and white (by Charles Van Enger who shot the Lon Chaney Sr. classic *Phantom of the Opera*) and despite the concerns of Mr. Karloff, never dipped to the point of being a parody. This was just a Universal horror movie that happened to feature the goofy antics of Abbott and Costello.

When the film was released in July of 1948 it became an instant hit. It was the most successful of the *Frankenstein* franchise since the 1931 original and it revived the careers of Abbott and Costello and the fortunes of Universal Pictures. The film truly does warrant inclusion in any discussion or examination of the great Universal Horror films of the '30s and '40s. It represents what horror movies are supposed to represent – good, scary fun, only the emphasis here is on fun.

—Christopher Heard



WOMEN IN FURY

The Brazilian Jungle's Wildest Creatures!

IN STORES JULY 2001

Covering for her brother, who killed a Brazilian drug lord, Angela Duvall is sent to a women's prison. Trapped behind bars, Angela's beauty excites the passions in her fellow prisoners and the guards alike. Unfortunately, she also catches the eye of a group of inmates who work for the man her brother murdered. In order to live long enough for her brother's confession to arrive, she must escape with her fellow prisoners into the dark Brazilian jungle!

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IN STORES JUNE 2001

Professor Malcom Evans leads his archaeological expedition into the Valley of Temples in southeast Sicily. His companion and former student, Liza Harris, is looking forward to her very first dig. But Liza feels a strange sympathy with the valley, and her recurring nightmares seem strongly tied to the nearby ruins. She is drawn to the remains of a 16th Century convent and its grisly legend of crucifixion, sneaking away from the dig site to explore on her own. The local villagers rise to protect the entombed secrets of their ancestors, as Liza's obsession with uncovering the truth takes her deeper into the forbidden ruins and further from sanity!

Directed by John David MacDonald
Interviewed by JILL D
Interviewed on June 11, 2001, P.E. at the NY
Interviewed by JILL D
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